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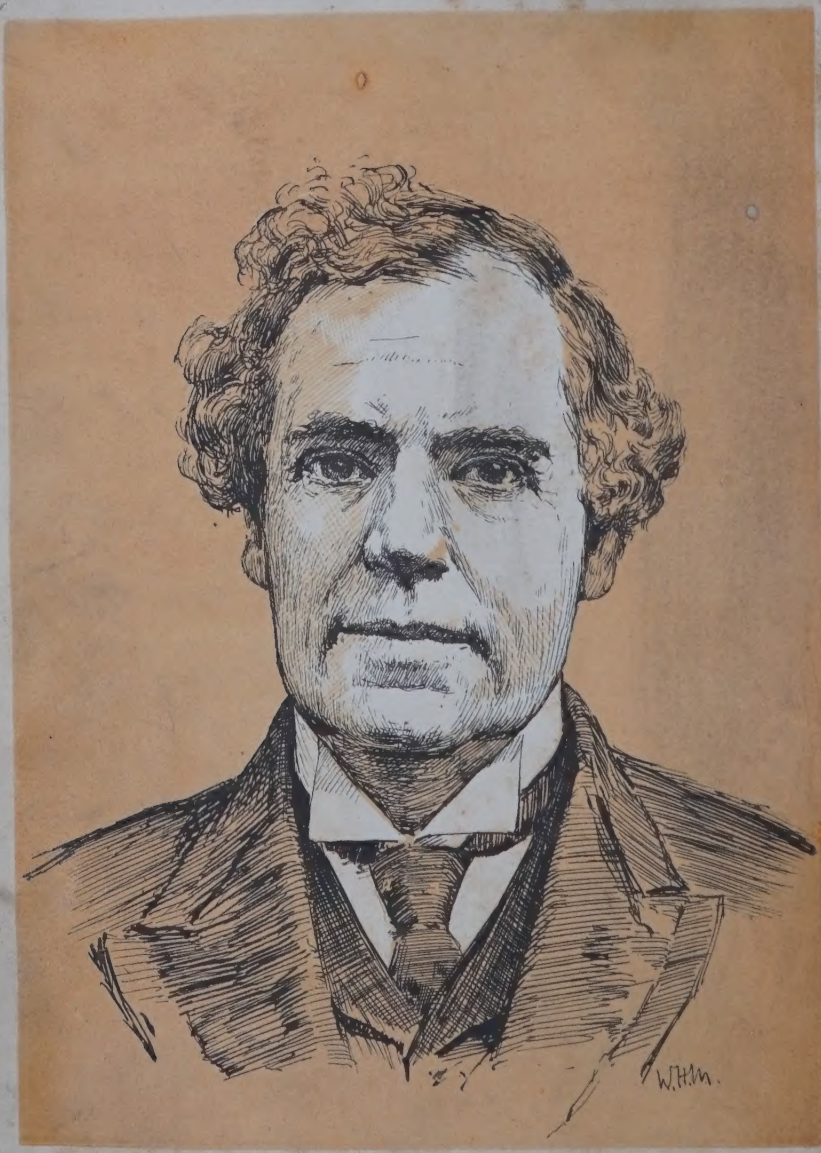


Yours very truly

J. L. Toole

# REMINISCENCES

OF

# J. L. TOOLE

*RELATED BY HIMSELF, AND CHRONICLED BY*


## JOSEPH HATTON

*Author of "Clytie," "Cruel London," "The Gay World," "Christopher Kenrick," "Journalistic London," &c.*



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ILLUSTRATED BY ALFRED BRYAN AND W. H. MARGETSON

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.


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Second Edition.


LONDON:

HURST AND BLACKETT, LIMITED,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1889.



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# PREFACE.

WHAT a different thing talking is compared with writing! I am on tour when I jot down this profound reflection. My dear friend Joseph Hatton has been on my track since we parted in town, a month or two ago, with this one message, by post and telegram—"You ought to write the Preface, every word of it!" As it is my own Preface of course I ought, and of course I have done so. But while the writing of it has been a labour of love, it has bothered me a good deal more than a labour of love is supposed to do.

Many times I have admired the skill with which my collaborator has written, in these pages, stories which seemed to me to require, for a complete narration, the point one puts into an anecdote when acting it. I am occasionally called upon to make a speech in public. Well, I get along now and then pretty well, thanks to the inspiration that seems to come to me from the friendly sympathy of my audience; but there is no inspiration

in a blank sheet of paper, and there is no applause in pens and ink. When one makes a speech one seeks kindly faces around one, and it is wonderful what assistance there is in a little applause. You take up the report of a speech in a newspaper; you see that it is peppered with "Laughter," "Applause," "Loud cheers," and so on; that sets you reading it, and carries you on to the end. It is very much the same with a speaker; he makes his little joke, and there is a laugh, which helps him to his next; then he says a nice thing about the occasion, and gets a round of applause; that helps him on his road to the climax, when he hopes to finish up, and mostly does—with a burst of enthusiasm. What I am coming to is an emphasis of my original point—the tremendous difference between speaking and writing.

Sitting down in cold blood, as it were, to introduce these Reminiscences, I feel that I can only be more or less formal in my expressions of diffidence, hoping I don't intrude, and so on. Hatton says, "Make the Preface a speech, if you like." But how can I make a speech to an audience whom I cannot see? It would be like speaking into a phonograph. If there were any applause, one would have to make it oneself. That would be the worst kind of *claque* imaginable. If our public speaking of the future is to be done in this way,

what is to become of the personal magnetism of the orator? Nevertheless, I am told by scientific forecasters that fifty years hence a public speaker will simply address his phonograph, and send the cylinders to be reeled off on the platform of St. James's Hall, or wherever the great meeting may be held, while he remains comfortably at home or spends the evening at his club, to read in due course a full report of his speech in the newspapers. It will be a curious change in the administration of public affairs. There will, however, be one great advantage—to a speaker; his remarks will assuredly be correctly reported, because, of course, his phonographic cylinders will be handed to the Press, and the printers will set up their types from the voice itself. This may be a little awkward where other speeches are being set up into type. The noise of a lot of phonograms being reeled off at the same time must be rather confusing; but, of course, if that is so, they will invent something to meet the case. As long as they don't invent phonographic theatres, with all the good actors and good plays of an entire season thrown into the purchase of a fireside instrument, it does not much matter. But I am diverging. Let us get back to the point where the phonograph interrupted us.

It was Hatton's last resort to follow me up with

the suggestion, "Make it a speech." I was having a holiday at Aix, but the shadow of the Preface fell upon me even at the Kursaal. I went to Lucerne, where our friend Irving was staying, and the thought of this address to the reader added a deeper shadow, in my estimation, to the natural reflections of the lake. I had to go to Lucerne to give Irving my ideas upon some new readings in *Macbeth*. I am bound to say they were not received with the gravity one is accustomed to in tragedians. But that is neither here nor there, and I fear I am again digressing. It is astonishing what you can do under pressure. It was not my idea to write these Reminiscences; it was not Hatton's idea; it was the outcome of a request from Mr. Tillotson, the great Literary "Syndic" who supplies the Newspaper Press with the works of Wilkie Collins, William Black, Miss Braddon, Rider Haggard, Mrs. Oliphant, Walter Besant, and the other leading novelists of the day. It was Tillotson who said to my collaborator, "Why not the Reminiscences of Toole for a char. ?" And Hatton of course said, "Why not?"—as well he might, seeing that he had already been making a few notes about me, in, however, such a vague kind of way that they would have come to nothing but for the stimulus of Tillotson's desire to introduce into his

literary wares the truth that is "stranger than fiction;" a stimulus which fixed Hatton to dates of production, and which made me the slave of Hatton; the willing slave, I am ready to admit, for we are old friends, we have sympathies in common; and it has been a great and novel delight to me to see these chapters grow under the expert's hand, to read the proofs, and to have my words and anecdotes, my ideas and notions photographed in type.

If the readers only enjoy the story that follows as much as I have enjoyed telling it to my collaborator, and as much as he says he has enjoyed writing it, we shall be a happy family of authors and readers. You know how it is when you make a speech; you often think of the clever things you could have said after you have sat down. It is similar with Reminiscences, as you will discover when you come to tell your own story, as of course you will tell it. Everybody is relating his reminiscences nowadays, and a capital form of literature it is. "How do you do? When are your reminiscences coming out?" will, I expect, become a regular form of social salutation soon; very much better too than always beginning conversations with the weather. I am continually thinking of something I ought to have said in the chapters that are closed, and I hope those of my

friends who expect me to relate all the incidents in which they are interested will forgive me if they are disappointed. I have had many letters pointing out things I ought to have mentioned during the run of the Reminiscences, and I have made additions and corrections here and there, and with much satisfaction; but I cannot remember every boy who was at school with me, nor every man I have met since; nor is it necessary to record all the circumstances under which I have written orders for the play. Moreover, I have not had it quite all my own way in these records, and I offer this fact as an additional explanation and apology for sundry omissions. It was not merely with a desire to tell my story that Hatton donned his literary gear; but to interest and amuse the public. If he had settled down into the regular groove of biographical narrative, with all its solemnities of dates, with its records of school-days, its early ambitions, its little battles, and its big disappointments, its diary notes and its copies of letters from celebrities and others, you would not have been coaxed through six hundred pages as you will now, nor would you have had as characteristic a sketch of a career in which so many of you, my good and kind friends, have shown so much generous and tender interest.

There are plenty of shortcomings in these pages.

Hatton frequently speaks of them. But he is always very modest about his work. I have one feeling in regard to this book we have produced together, which I think the reader and the critic will endorse; our volumes are not pretentious, and they are not dull. Our united object has been to try and consider the readers more than ourselves. We both hope that critics and readers will take the work for what it professes to be, not what they think it should have been. For my own part, I shall always look back to the days of its production as a very pleasant, happy time, shadowed, as all happy times are, by sorrowful memories and incidents; but happy as this world goes, and made the happier by friendly letters and journalistic compliments which, from week to week, have signalized its serial publication, and by the confident hope that the complete work will be received with equal favour by the general public, to whom no man living has more reason to be grateful than

J. L. TOOLE.

*On Tour, October*, 1888.

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# REMINISCENCES

OF

# J. L. TOOLE, THE COMEDIAN.

## I.

## FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.

An unlooked-for pleasure—Prefatory remarks—A word to the reader—Reminiscences of a red-letter night and the story of some yellow tickets—"It does make me so wild!"—Toole and Sothern—A chop in the city—Mrs. Howard Paul—"Didn't I tell thee so!"—Toole and Irving studying character—A sorrowful incident with a happy ending—The Chestnut Bell.

I.

"Toole—For One Night Only!"

Such was the legend that smiled at me from the walls and windows of a little West Midland town one memorable day in the autumn of eighteen hundred and seventy-eight.

When I say the legend smiled, I speak advisedly. Mr. Toole's provincial posters have a physiognomy of their own, and it is humorous. Perhaps you may not think that placards have

characteristics that suggest their individual authors? Examine the first advertising hoarding you come across and see if they have not. Professor Herkomer tried to ennoble bill-sticking, but the art that conceals art was absent from his example of a "bold advertisement." His classic maidens looked scornfully down upon the flaring posters around them. Above their business, (advertising is a business), they were overshadowed by their commonplace neighbours.

No, you cannot level advertising up to the ideal of Professor Herkomer; yet it is possible to give a few printed words as much public force as if you decorated them with studies from the marble halls of Alma Tadema, or the frescoed graces of Sir Frederic Leighton. Mr. Toole's writing on the walls of the little town which we are discussing needed not the aid of pictorial artifice. The frank, honest, open statement "Toole—For One Night Only" eclipsed the surrounding placards. It shone in their midst like a talisman, and "it acted like a charm." The genial burgesses acknowledged it with nods of welcome; and in the stranger who had just entered their gates they had one who heartily sympathized with their pleasant humour. The unexpected announcement of the comedian's presence made me as happy as if I had "come into money."

It was what the English *impressario* calls a "one-night" and his American contemporary a "one-horse" town. To this day Mr. Toole loves his one-night towns. In the course of his travels he has swept the United Kingdom, big cities and small, busy towns and slow; from London to John-o'-Groats; from John-o'-Groats to Land's End; from Edinburgh to the Western Islands; from Dublin to Kerry; from ancient Chester to the newest seaside resort of the glorious Principality of Wales. He will act with as much personal satisfaction before the unsophisticated audience of a rural borough as he will to a critical crowd in London.

When they knew at the hotel that I was only anxious to have my dinner served quickly, because I wished to present myself among the first at the doors of the Assembly Rooms to see "Toole for one night only," my commands were received with exceptional cordiality. I stood at the hotel door and smoked a cigarette; I then went into the bar for that pernicious "sherry and bitters" which is supposed in English hotels to be the proper prologue to dinner; and on all hands the people were talking of Toole. Recalling the incident in later years, I am reminded of the Anglo-Florentine novelist's "Pascarel." Verona in frescoed state stands out from the mist, and I

hear the cry of "*Pascaréllo! Pascarél!*" Not that there is the faintest likeness between the Veglione masquer and the English comedian, except in the popularity of his name among the people. I have known the time when the placarded intimation, "Toole is Coming," would create quite as much real commotion in a provincial town as the excitement that prevailed when the streets of the City of Lilies echoed to the cry of "*Pascaréllo!*" They take the announcement more calmly now, in the little worlds outside London, than they did in those days, but they have for Mr. Toole a no less sincere welcome, and he is still their devoted servant.

## II.

He is ever the prince of humorists who can cry as well as laugh. Robson was a low comedian, but he is chiefly remembered for his serious comedy and his flashes of tragic power. Toole is best known in London as the spirit of farce and burlesque. In the provinces they are not content only to spend merry evenings with him; they love his "Uncle Dick," his "Caleb Plummer," his "Michael Garner;" and it is not alone upon the stage that the famous comedian exhibits this double gift of fun and pathos; it is the reflec-

tion of his own sympathetic nature, a capacity to feel the tender emotions of the mind as well as the excitement of mirth and gaiety. Much of Mr. Toole's personal popularity may be traced to these qualities. His work has always been artistic and honest. He has been a leading star in London and the provinces for the best part of his life. No actor has been more honoured by men whose friendship is a distinction and an endorsement of character. No actor is more respected by his professional brethren, nor more sincerely beloved by the great mass of playgoers. He possesses a fund of natural humour, and is the life and soul of any company which has the good fortune to have him for host or guest.

The writer who undertakes to give an account of Mr. Toole's life and work, his clever stories, his unrehearsed jests, and his career in general, has no easy task, except when he appeals to those who know how the humorous comedian tells a story, how he acts it, how he imitates the person in the narrative, and who know the mobility of his facial endowments, and his many humorous and delightful idiosyncrasies. There is no more familiar figure in all England than that of Mr. Toole, and many who read these volumes will be able to put into his stories the personal colour, the twinkle of the eye, the twist of the mouth, the

quiet chuckle, which belong to the Toole individuality.

It was Mr. Toole's peculiar mimetic faculty which first brought him upon the stage; but we will discuss this and other incidents of his early life by-and-by. In the present work the chronicler does not begin at the beginning. Such a proceeding would not be in keeping with his subject (Mr. Toole is nothing unless he is discursive and "fancy free") and under present circumstances it would also be highly inconvenient.

III.

"TOOLE—For One Night Only!"

I had several reasons to be delighted with the advent of the famous comedian at the little West Midland town. Firstly, I, too, was there for one night only; secondly, Mr. Toole was my intimate friend; and thirdly, I had been commissioned by the editor of a certain London newspaper to contribute to his "Portrait Gallery" of Pen-and-ink Sketches a word-picture of Mr. Toole.

"Interviewing" was at that time only just coming into journalistic fashion. Mr. Edmund Yates had grafted a literary shoot of the American idea upon the *World;* I had done something in this way for *Harper's Magazine* and the *Times* of New York; and M. Blowitz had exploited

"the Yankee notion" in several personal chronicles for the *Times* of London. Otherwise the English Press was very properly fighting shy of the sort of thing which had made itself offensively known in this country as an "Interview;" but the true art of both journalism and criticism is to seize upon what is good in every new method of work, and not to condemn the whole of a thing, whatever it may be, because part of it is bad, or, as in the case of "Interviewing," because of an ignorant abuse of it. If we in England are slow to make changes in our established institutions, our unanimity is delightful when the day of conversion arrives; and if the principle which governs our public criticism is eminently conservative, it is also eminently honest, and in the end eminently correct.

"Toole—For One Night Only!"

Such a unique opportunity for combining business with pleasure had rarely offered itself in my literary and journalistic experience. Over a brace of birds and a glass of Madeira, I resolved that I would fulfil the commission of a certain London editor, and not only make the pen-and-ink sketch he required, but "Interview" the subject thereof at the same time; and I mention this at the outset of these Reminiscences because that Interview may be said to be the origin of this work, and it cer-

tainly has suggested to me the form and method of its literary construction.

IV.

THOSE who know Mr. Toole, need not be told that he is not, in his private affairs, what the world calls a methodical person; not one of those busy men who find time to keep diaries of the follies and backslidings of the great people they meet; not a secret historian of the events of his time, nor an epistolary recorder of his own life and adventures. As in his charities he is the last man in the world to let his left hand know what his right hand doeth, so, in the matter of his career, it is a blank as far as his own notes of it are concerned. Therefore, in this account of memories, of anecdotes, of work and play, of mirth and sorrow (we do not always wear the cap and bells) the literary form of the modern "Interview" is of all methods the best for our present purpose; and by way of the encouragement which belongs to the example of success, it has for its precursors, "Medwin's Conversations with Lord Byron," and the chronicles of "Henry Irving's Impressions of America."

Mr. Toole agrees with the recorder hereof in this view of his Reminiscences. A combination of narrative and conversation has, for the reader, the advantage of making him more of a party to

the business than is the case with the established autobiographical method; he takes his place, as it were, in the conversations, and is invited to participate in the dramatic incidents as they are narrated; as I invite him now to go back with me to that autumn evening ten years ago, when, together, we will see Mr. Toole in several characters, not only on the stage but off, not only as a popular actor, but as one of the most ingenious and ingenuous of jesters.

"Toole—For One Night Only!"

I have said that I was destined to remain in that pleasant little town until the next day. It seemed to me, when I went forth into the streets, as if all the county was there. The hotel had become suddenly crowded with guests. Carriages were setting down ladies and gentlemen at the Assembly Rooms in a continuous stream. I wandered round to the back of the hall in search of the stage-door. I could discover no entrance of the kind, and returning to the front, found the hero of the evening, himself, trying to pass the magic portals of the extemporised theatre. The programme commenced with a short piece in which the star did not appear. I understood the situation at once. Toole had come quietly down to take his place in the entertainment at eight o'clock, and had just made the uncomfortable discovery that there was no way to the stage

except through the front of the house. Standing aside within the shadow of the porchway or awning, I witnessed a little original comedy, in which Mr. Toole was engaged for his own especial edification, and which enabled me to open that pen-and-ink sketch with an anecdote—the very

"YELLOW TICKET THIS WAY."

best way to begin anything, I believe, if the story is only worth the telling.

"Do you say you *can't* let me in?" Toole was saying, as I arrived upon the scene.

"Not without a yellow ticket," replied a hot and excited policeman—one of those big burly countrymen who know their duty and stand by it.

Toole glues his eye-glass into his right eye,

and contemplates the bustle with evident satisfaction.

"Yellow tickets this way!" is the policeman's constant cry.

The yellows are the high and mighty county folk; they belong to the reserved seats.

Toole, turning his collar up, now presents himself to the janitor of the yellow seats in another character, and endeavours to push his way in.

"Yellow tickets this way," says the policeman, looking in an opposite direction, but firmly obstructing Toole.

"I must go in," says Toole; "I can't come to-morrow night."

"To-morrow night!" exclaims the policeman with disdain, "it would be no good if you could."

"How's that?" asks Toole.

"Why, he won't be here to-morrow night."

"Who won't?"

"Why this 'ere Toole. Yellow tickets this way!"

"Not be here to-morrow night!" says Toole; "then I really *must* go in; and that's all about it!"

"Now it ain't no good a-shovin', mister! You can't go in here without a yellow ticket; why don't 'e try t'other door?" Then in a louder key —"Yellow tickets this way!"

Toole looks at his watch, chuckles quietly to himself, waits until the last of a family party has been ushered within the hall, and then returns to the attack.

"I say, look here," he says, making a serious effort to be confidential with the officer, "I don't mind telling you, but this 'ere Toole can't act unless I am there."

"Oh, now you, mister, please don't go on a-botherin' me."

"*But I must go on a-botherin' you!*" Toole replies; "I curls his hair; he can't go on the stage without I curls his hair; I'm his barber."

"His barber! Curls his hair!" exclaims the janitor. "How be I to know you curls his hair?"

"If you'll come outside I'll show you the scissors."

"Come outside! How be I to come outside?"

"You don't want a yellow ticket to come outside, do you?" says Toole, a surprised and very innocent look of wonder upon his face.

"Now, look here, mister, you must stand aside—Yellow tickets this way!"

"Can I stand *aside* without a yellow ticket?" asks Toole, now looking at his watch with just a shade of anxiety on his face, the policeman more flustered than ever as he recognizes in a group of the very last comers a member of the county

bench, with his haughty wife and buxom daughters.

"Yellow tickets this way. Thankee, sir; this way, my lady; thankee, my lady!"

"I can stand *aside* without a yellow ticket," says Toole, when the last exciting incident is at an end, "and you don't want a yellow ticket to come *outside*. And yet you want a yellow ticket to go *inside*. Really it is the most extraordinary thing! *It does make me so wild!*"

The simple-minded officer looking at his questioner in a puzzled manner, inclined for a moment to get angry, seeks relief in his war-cry of "Yellow tickets this way!" at the moment that a burst of applause comes swelling through the half-open doorway, and Toole is rescued by a tall, military-looking gentleman, in faultless evening dress, and wearing a moustache and imperial that are dark compared with his white hair. This is Mr. George Loveday, his agent and friend, whose merry eye takes in the situation at once, and appreciates the fun of it. Mr. Loveday at once provides his chief with a yellow ticket, confers a similar favour on myself, and I follow the famous comedian to his dressing-room, where he is glad to welcome an old friend. While he is making up for "Chawles" in his latest London success, *A Fool and His Money*, we compare notes about the little unrehearsed comedy just concluded out-

side the theatre. I tell him of my scheme for combining business with pleasure, and suggest that the Interview shall be of an anecdotical character, whereupon he is reminded of an incident in which the most persistent of practical jokers, Sothern, was himself the victim.

V.

"SOTHERN occurs to me at the moment," says Toole, "because I have only this week been seeing him off to America, from Liverpool. Well, he had played me a rather easy trick. I didn't think my turn would come so soon as it did. This is what happened: A friend and myself had engaged to meet Sothern on a little matter of business at a chop-house in the city, one of those odd old places that always interest me, and which I wanted to show Sothern. I don't know anything more amusing than a prowl about the city; I lived in the city as a boy, and I expect I understand the fun and humour of it more than most fellows on that account. Sothern was late. We were only going to have a chop or steak and a glass of wine, so we did not order anything, but thought we would wait until Sothern came. Both my friend and myself were attracted by a cantankerous-looking old gentleman in a dress-coat with a high collar, and a pair of tortoise-shell eye-

glasses, who was not eating a chop, but devouring it, going at it as if it had done him an injury. It was not the thing at all, I know, but on the impulse of the moment, prompted by his odd

MR. SOTHERN.

appearance, I stepped up to him at a critical moment of his luncheon, slapped him familiarly on the shoulder, and said, 'Hallo! George, my dear fellow, how are you?'

"The old gentleman leaped from his seat very indignantly, dropped his knife and fork, and asked what I meant, how I dared to salute him in that way. I apologized in the most graceful manner possible, said he reminded me of an old friend, hoped he would not think anything of it, quite a mistake, and in due time I overcame his evident desire to strangle me.

"We adjourned to another part of the room, and by-and-by Sothern came in. I nudged my friend, feeling that my opportunity of revenge had arrived. You know Sothern's intense love of fun, his great animal spirits, and his general anxiety for excitement.

"'Odd-looking fellow,' I said to him, 'the old gentleman who has just commenced upon a second chop. I've a good mind to step over, slap him on the shoulder, call him George, and say it's years since I've seen him. He's such an odd-looking fish!'

"'I'll do it,' said Sothern.

"'No,' I replied, 'perhaps he would know you.'

"'Not at all; he'd never know me,' answers Sothern.

"'What a strange-looking old chap he is! I don't think you had better do it,' I said.

"But nothing would restrain Sothern when once an idea had taken possession of him. Just

as the old gentleman was conveying a dainty morsel to his capacious mouth, he was saluted by Sothern with a hearty smack on the back, and an exclamation of 'Hallo, George! Why, it must be years since I've seen you.'

"The stranger could scarcely speak for passion. 'How dare you, you ruffian!' he exclaimed. Whereupon Sothern, in his pleasantest manner, began to make his excuses. 'Don't tell me, sir; you did it on purpose! I know it. I have had my chop here for twenty years, and such a thing never occurred before. Landlord, what is the meaning of it? I will not put up with it. This is the second time I have been assaulted and called 'George' in this very room within ten minutes!'

"It occurred to us that it would be well to take our luncheon in some other restaurant. As we left we were presently joined by Sothern, and I am bound to do him the justice to say that, although a little chagrined, he shook his head and cried 'quits' as calmly as could possibly be expected under the circumstances, and I hope that is the greatest liberty I ever took with a stranger in my life. I made an opportunity to find out that old gentleman on a subsequent occasion, and over a glass of a particular vintage of port wine, which he always favoured at the

house in question, I made my peace with him, and laid the foundation of an agreeable acquaintanceship." [1]

VI.

"CURTAIN's up, please, Mr. Toole," says the call-boy, which gives the actor time enough to remark, "You won't go away, will you? I'll be back very soon—unless you'd like to go in front—yellow tickets this way!" Then, listening for the ap-

[1] Mr. Frith, in his delightful "Autobiography and Reminiscences," pays an unconscious tribute to Sothern's humour by telling this story as Sothern had evidently told it to him. Of course Sothern made a version of his own, in which he reversed the positions of the two leading figures in the little comedy. Mr. Frith has a pleasant reference to Mr. Toole, with an illustrative anecdote, which I venture to quote:—"I hope that I shall not offend my friend when I announce that he is a practical joker; but his jokes are harmless—not like some others that I have named—and always amusing. It is told of him that he was seen, at the close of a railway journey, to be going through a performance with one of his gloves, which, on a close observation, appeared to be the stuffing it with cotton-wool, till it assumed the shape of a human hand. He then contrived to arrange it in front of his coat so that it should appear to be one of his own, and he placed his railway ticket between the fingers. The train stopped presently, and the usual cry, 'All tickets ready!' was heard. 'Tickets, please,' said the guard, opening the door of the carriage. 'Take mine,' said Toole. The guard took the ticket, and the hand as well. 'The guard was a robust person,' Toole is reported to have said, 'but he staggered back in a faint, calling feebly for smelling salts.'"

proach of his cue, he says, "We don't often play in Town Halls and Assembly Rooms, but when we do we always have first-rate audiences —a little inconvenient as to room, but try and make yourself comfortable ; I don't smoke, as you know, but you will find a cigar on the mantel-shelf, and my dresser will give you a soda and brandy."

He resumes his eyeglass, tries to find a cigar, makes a dive for the soda and brandy. I assure him I require neither one nor the other, and the next moment "Chawles" is in the presence of a most enthusiastic audience. I glance at the house from the wings, find it crammed, the reserved seats filled with aristocratic and fashionably-dressed people. The county policeman has transferred his services from the outside to the inner portals of the temple of Thespis, and is evidently getting his face ready for expressing as much hilarity as the presence of certain members of the magisterial bench may deem reasonably decorous in an officer on duty. The comedy goes with roars of laughter, every point in it is taken, every humorous situation recognized. At the end of the act there is a unanimous call for the company, and no one is more off his guard in the demonstration of his satisfaction than the Johnnie in blue.

VII.

"I HAD a dreadful shock the other night," says Toole, returning by-and-by to his dressing-room. "It is, as you know, the property man's place to give me every night in 'Chawles' a photograph, which is supposed to be the portrait of my sweet-

MRS. HOWARD PAUL.

heart; I get a different picture pretty well every time, and I hardly ever notice it much, though of course I pretend to. Well, the other night, just before I went on, I had read in an evening paper of the death of Mrs. Howard Paul,[2] which made

[2] Although Mrs. Howard Paul was best known to the general

me feel sad, for you know what a good, clever creature she was, and in that portrait-scene shortly afterwards I found that the photograph pushed

public as the leading attraction of a high-class variety entertainment arranged and managed by her husband, Mr. Howard Paul (a native of Philadelphia, United States), she was distinguished both upon the lyric and the dramatic stage. She was born at Dartford in Kent, and made her first success as "Captain Macheath," in *The Beggar's Opera*, at the Strand, on October 24th, 1853, and appeared in the same part at the Haymarket a year later, with great success. Soon afterwards she married Mr. Paul, and they appeared together in their well-known entertainment of *Patchwork*, following in the wake of *Sophia and Annie*, and preceding the German Reed class of performance, since merged into the present more dramatic form of work which has for many years made "German Reed's" a London institution. In 1869 Mrs. Howard Paul returned to the stage, and played "Lady Macbeth" to Mr. Phelps' "Macbeth" at Drury Lane. Later she appeared as the dashing heroine of *The Grand Duchess*, rivalling in the part its original French creator. Soon afterwards she originated an entertainment of her own, travelling through the provinces with a miscellaneous company that included Arthur Matheson, Mr. Rutland Barrington, and occasionally Mr. George Grossmith, junior. She appeared with the two last-mentioned artists in the original cast of *The Sorcerer* at the Opera Comique, and afterwards went tour with *The Crisis* company, playing Mrs. John Wood's original part. She was taken ill during this engagement, and only literally reached home in time to die. She was a singularly generous and highly-gifted woman. The *Athenæum* said of her that "she sacrificed for second-rate objects an amount of natural vocal endowment rarely combined (at least in this country) with such genius for the stage as she undoubtedly possessed, which might have made her the Malibran of England, and, as such, an artist of European renown."

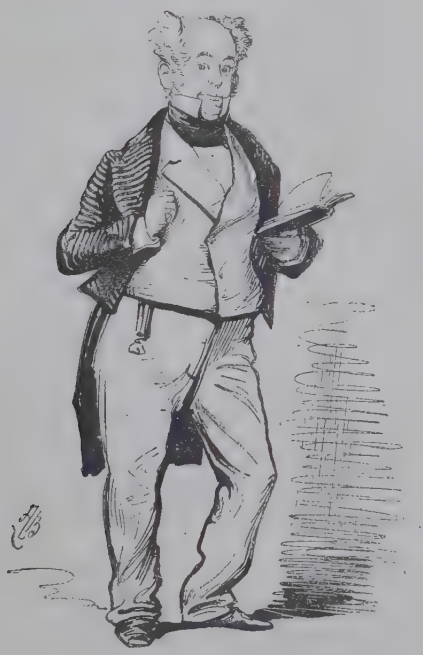
into my hand was poor Mrs. Paul's likeness. I expect I made a very serious face, did something I had never done before, and the house roared with laughter. They thought I meant it for fun; I certainly did not; for a few moments I never felt more miserable in my life. I had been rather dull just previously, for I had been staying at the hotel where my poor friends Charles Mathews, and Brown, of the Prince's, Manchester, had died, and I had had a little memorial of Phelps sent me that very day, and altogether, don't you know, I was very hipped. But——"

And again he disappeared; again there was a demonstration. I wonder, by the way, if the country policeman had "detected" him by this time? Presently there was a roar of laughter and then another. I smoked in the little room, sitting on a packing-case, while the comedian's dresser was busy with his next change. The table in front of me was covered with "make-up" materials—the traditional rouge-pot and hare's foot, the lamp-black, the camel's-hair pencil; and upon a nail hung the jockey's suit for *The Steeplechase*. Mr. Toole has played this farce and *Ici on parle Français*, more times than any actor has probably ever played two pieces before. They have been in his programmes and constantly performed for nearly thirty years.

The judgment of actors in regard to parts that

suit them, or in which they are likely to be successful, is not always reliable.

"When first I was offered the part in '*Ici*,'" Toole says, "I refused it. I was a member of



MR. TOOLE AS "SPRIGGINS" IN "ICI ON PARLE FRANÇAIS."

the Adelphi company at the time. Webster read the farce to me, but, great actor as he was, I don't think he read farces well. I said, in the first place, the part of an old man was not my line of busi-

ness, and secondly I knew nothing about French, the latter excuse under the circumstances, I am willing to admit, being rather a poor one. I suggested that Billington should play it; but he was cast for 'Victor Dubois,' and Webster said, 'You can't tell from reading how a farce will go. I daresay you will work it up into something—indeed I am sure you will.' He urged me so earnestly to play the part that I consented. It went fairly well on the first night, and gradually grew into a great success. I added new business to it for ever so long, took advantage of accidental laughs and gags, and at last brought it to what it is. I could at the outset have purchased it for a few pounds, but I didn't, and up to the present time I have paid a fee for every performance of it, and I have acted it not hundreds but thousands of times."

*Ici* and *The Steeplechase* are in fact two of the most popular of the farces which Mr. Toole plays. "It does make me so wild!"—one of his many familiar gags—is adopted into the local vocabulary wherever he plays "Tittums." But sometimes another actor, playing the same part, will annex his contemporary's "business," as it is called. Mr. Toole had curious experiences of this when he visited America. His theatrical cousins had repeated his business and his gags with com-

plimentary fidelity. To some of his audiences it seemed as if he were imitating their own popular favourites. This kind of thing is not, however, confined to America. It obtains in all countries. When the influence of a good actor spreads as an inspiration, and is accepted in the way of suggestion and method, such limited imitation is to be commended; but when the aim is merely to reproduce another's manner, and to repeat words and business which are the outcome of the original interpreter's careful study of a part, then surely the copyist lays himself open to serious condemnation.

VIII.

"TALKING about certain actors who crib another's business—and I don't think many do it," says Toole, when "Chawles" is over and *The Steeplechase* is being got ready, "I'll tell you an amusing story. I've been rather successful, as you know, in inventing some catch sayings, such as, 'Still I am not happy,' 'It does make me so wild,' and so on. Well, when I first played *The Steeplechase* at Sheffield, the stage-carpenter hadn't placed the door and other things quite as I wanted them, and every time I wished them changed he said, 'Oh, sir, Jack So-and-So always had it this way.' I found to get all I wanted properly done I had to

make myself very agreeable, as indeed I hope I always do. The carpenter, a blunt Yorkshire fellow, took quite a fancy to me, and was very obliging, even generous. When the scene was set for rehearsal, he took me aside, and said, 'Look here, Mester Toole, I'll just tell thee summat; you'll not foind it in th' book, but Jack So-and-So, whenever he come to th' top of stage, or put his head out of door, he'd keep saying, '*does mak' me so wild!*' Now, just you do that, Mester Toole, and see how it will go; just you try it.' As usual, when the night came, it did go, with roars of laughter. 'Now, then, didn't I tell thee so?' said the stage-carpenter, as I came off; and he is to this day under the delusion that he has had a great deal to do with my success in life."

IX.

"SLUMMING" is a modern fashion, but both Irving and Toole were always slummers. Nothing delights either of them more than making excursions into the back streets of old towns, wandering about in the haunts of the people. When they were less known, this was easier than it is now, and resulted in many odd and curious experiences. They are both great students of character, the one with a more grim appreciation of the weird side of human nature

than the other; but both quick, not only to discern oddities in men and manners, but equally rapid in their realizations of the quaint and curious aspects of human nature.

"I think an actor who loves his profession," Toole remarks, in a parting chat on that memorable "one night only," "sees more of the truly human side of life than any other man, except in the case of painters like Wilkie, or a novelist such as Dickens; because it is our business to go into the streets, into the slums, into markets and taverns, into society for our models. I hardly remember anything I do that is not the result of something I have seen, some oddity I have noted in real life, some eccentric trick of a person, some queer mode of dress or speech, something that one almost unconsciously seizes upon as characteristic of the fictitious part one has to play; and this study of real character has always been to me a great enjoyment, and always will be so; at times, when I have been below par, as they say, having a touch of the miserables, I have found it a perfect cure to sally forth character hunting. I daresay there are many people who think that a comedian, particularly a low comedian, is never unhappy; but, as a rule, I believe he is often in truth more miserable than the tragedian, who gets used to sorrowful parts, and therefore does

not mind a bit of the reality; I believe I am an exception, in respect of animal spirits; I was always of a cheerful disposition, and I often feel quite as merry as the rollicking part I am playing can possibly require, and enjoy the fun of it as much as my audiences. But, as I was saying a little while since, there are, of course, many pathetic instances of actors being entertaining and funny on the stage, when in truth they are suffering the mental agony of grief and sorrow. Duty is duty in all businesses and professions. I don't say that it is only upon the stage that men and women have to fulfil their engagements handicapped by some sudden or recent affliction; but there is something nevertheless additionally pathetic, I always think, when an actor has to be funny on the stage while his heart is at home with some great sorrow.

"I remember, many years ago at Bradford, an incident that has always dwelt in my mind touching this phase of an actor's life. We were rehearsing *Paul Pry*. A young man came on for old 'Stanley.' He was nervous in his manner and shaky in his words. The manager was rather rough with him, which was perhaps right and proper for the discipline of the company; perhaps this made me additionally considerate with the young fellow. I gave him all the

encouragement I could, and at night he played fairly well ; he was a little slow, however, and not very effective. The next morning, at a rehearsal of *The Steeplechase*, in which he was cast for the waiter, I was sitting at the prompter's table, when

MR. TOOLE AND THE NERVOUS ACTOR.

I heard a voice at my elbow say in very subdued tones, 'I am afraid I was very nervous last night ; I hope you will look over it.'

"I looked up, and saw my friend of the previous morning's rehearsal. I noticed that he was now dressed in black, and that there was a crape band on his hat.

"'Oh, yes,' I said, 'you did your best ; no man can do more.'

"He remained by the table in a curious, hesitating way, and then, almost in a whisper, and in a very apologetic way, said, 'The truth is, sir, my mother died the day before yesterday.'

"'I'm very sorry,' I said.

"'She was very fond of me,' he replied; and the incident dwelt in my memory as a very touching and tender thing. I often thought of the poor fellow, and was glad years afterwards when the story had a pleasant ending.

"One afternoon, when I was going to the Adelphi, through Covent Garden, a well-dressed, cheery-looking man stopped me with the remark, 'I beg your pardon, Mr. Toole, you don't remember me? I am the man who played "Stanley" so badly at Bradford.'

"I was quite glad to see the fellow. He seemed to lift from my mind what had always been a very sad memory.

"'Oh, yes,' I said, 'I quite remember. Glad you look more cheerful than you did then; hope you have prospered.'

"Yes, thank you,' he said, 'but not in the profession. No, I have a little business in London now, sir. Doing well, sir; married too, and all right.'

"'Pleased to hear it,' I said.

"'I was not up to my best mark at Bradford

for reasons,' he said, his face shadowing over a little at the remark 'for reasons'—and there was, I thought, a bit of grim humour in his closing remark, 'but all the same the manager fined me two-and-six for not being perfect in my words.'"

## X.

And thus the chronicler came to the end of that pen-and-ink sketch, which was to be more anecdotical than biographical. Suggesting the idea of further chats in a similar direction, it may well stand as the beginning of a personal record, unconventional, I hope, in treatment as in matter.

In America they call an old story a "chestnut," and severe sticklers for novelty carry what they call a "chestnut bell," which they ring—tinkle, tinkle, tinkle—whenever in society or elsewhere any gentleman indulges in a twice-told tale. Out West the other day one of these worthies found himself almost for the first time in a church, though he had a fair acquaintance with the best of all books. In an oratorical application of his text, the preacher began to tell the story of Jonah and the whale, whereupon the new-comer rang his chestnut bell.[3]

[3] Mr. Joseph Jefferson ("Rip Van Winkle") has recently explained the origin of the word "chestnut" as applied to

Should any reader of these opening chapters feel incline to imitate the American bell-ringer, I will ask him to consider this explanation. There is an industrious friend of mine on this side of the Atlantic who, from time to time, has availed himself of several and sundry true stories which I have related in the course of certain journalistic work. He has given the narratives new dates, and, in some instances, new actors, and fresh conclusions; and I am bound to say I think he has spoiled my original stories, though I daresay he

an old story, attributing its authorship to Mr. William Warren, the well-known American comedian.

"There is a melodrama," says Mr. Jefferson, "but little known to the present generation, written by William Dillon, and called *The Broken Sword*. There are two characters in it—one a Captain Zavier, and the other the comedy part of Pablo. The Captain is a sort of Baron Munchausen, and in telling of his exploits says :—'I entered the woods of Colloway, when suddenly from the thick boughs of a cork-tree'—Pablo interrupts him with the words, 'A chestnut, Captain; a chestnut.' 'Bah!' replies the Captain; 'Booby, I say a cork-tree!' 'A chestnut,' reiterates Pablo. 'I should know as well as you, having heard you tell the tale these twenty-seven times.' William Warren, who had often played the part of Pablo, was at a stage-dinner a few years ago, when one of the gentlemen present told a story of doubtful age and originality. 'A chestnut,' murmured Mr. Warren, quoting from the play, 'I have heard you tell the tale these twenty-seven times.' The application of the lines pleased the rest of the table, and when the party broke up each helped to spread the story and Mr. Warren's commentary. And that," says Mr. Jefferson, "is what I really believe to be the origin of the word 'chestnut.'"

may imagine he has improved them. In several cases he has put into the mouth of Mr. Toole, language not at all characteristic of that gentleman; so that when the reader comes upon a story that would seem to call for the chestnut bell, I would entreat him to remember that the story which Mr. Toole or myself tells him is the original story, and that all others are spurious. It will be worth while writing these volumes if one only rescues from the slums of back-door journalism such anecdotes as have been distorted, vulgarized, and otherwise disguised by alien hands and unimaginative scribblers. I use these phrases in a Parliamentary sense, and would not for the world hurt the sensitive feelings of any gentleman connected, however remotely, with either English or American journalism; but when you see your own story flung about, here and there, in a battered and mutilated shape, gradually drifting into the gutter, with probably an improper innuendo tacked upon its innocent tail, and its point applied to something altogether foreign to it, you may be excused for being vexed. At the same time, I would not have referred to the subject except in self-defence; but, in referring to it, I am tempted to observe, as Toole would remark, "It is a sort of thing one hates, and a man who will do it is a wretch; not that I wish to say so, for

he may be a dear, good fellow in other ways." In this matter of self-restraint in the condemnation of others, Toole is a sturdy example of generosity. He is no sooner hurried into a bit of severe criticism of some person whose conduct, public or private, has offended him, than he straightway "takes it back"—to quote an Americanism—as I would these few remarks about the chestnut bell if the explanation did not strike me as due to myself, to my friend, and to the reader.

# II.

## AT ORME SQUARE.

Robson and the pleasures of a garden—George Loveday—"Man proposes"—A pleasant room and a cheerful host—Getting shaved—"An 'oss of another colour"—Memorable birthdays—A remarkable evening—Legal luminaries and their extraordinary conduct—Too defiant—"That yere seven-and-six"—The cabmen's triumph—The Hon. Lewis Wingfield as "Mephistopheles"—Robson in Dublin—The story Toole told to Dickens—A happy home.

### I.

"THERE is a handsome house facing Kensington Gardens, marked out from its neighbours by the touches of bright colour illuminating its balconies and conservatory. It is a house with a general air of expansion and adaptation to modern requirements, which speaks airily of abundant internal comforts, yet with a vivacious sprightly exterior which says as plainly as house-front can, 'Cheerfulness and fun are as the air we breathe.' This house is the residence and property of Mr. J. L. Toole, the comedian, who, like a prudent, well-to-do citizen, has invested some of his well-earned

thousands in the lease of his dwelling-place. . . . Turn down Orme Square from the Bayswater Road—it is easily found by its rather obsolete white eagle, supported on two columns united like the Siamese twins; an eagle which may have begun moulting about the period of the visit of the Allied Sovereigns, and has protracted the process ever since. That eagle, like St. Petersburg Place, Moscow Road, Bark Place, and similar names, speaks of fortunes made in the Russian trade early in the century, and invested in Bayswater house property. The drolly-melancholy bird suggests to Mr. Toole's visitors the retired coachman in *The School for Tigers*, who had 'druv a Rooshun ambassador and two Lord Mayors, and attunes the mind for appreciating the bright quips and pleasant cranks, the overflowing fun and humour, awaiting you when the front door is opened and you receive the cheeriest of welcomes from the heartiest of hosts."

The *World*, in its picturesque fashion, was thus introducing to its readers one of its "Celebrities at Home," at about the time when the chronicler of these reminiscences was sketching for other pages, at home and in America, that "Portrait in Words," which, having developed into a chapter of stories ten years ago, is now growing into a series of anecdotical conversations.

Mr. Toole had removed to Orme Square from a not less cosy habitation situated on the brow of Haverstock Hill, where he revelled in a back garden sufficiently large to grow flowers, and to have the suburban distinction of a summer-house and a grass-plot. I remember his telling me, in

MR. F. ROBSON.

that very garden, that Robson frequently visited him there, on Sunday mornings, and that he had strongly advised his fellow-actor to take a house with a garden. "He was fidgetty and restless," Toole had said, "sometimes on the stage, I fancied, but always off, and I noticed that after we had sat in the summer-house for a time, with an

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occasional prowl on the grass, a sniff at a gilly-flower, or a bit of London Pride, he would settle down, like a man who is resting, grow quiet and reflective, and we would have a calm and enjoyable chat. I know nothing so soothing as a garden, nothing that calms the nerves so much as pottering about among flower-beds, especially when you have had a hand in their cultivation, if only to the extent of ordering the plants from the florists."

II.

It is summer when I find myself in Orme Square, a bright June morning. I have walked along Oxford Street, past the Marble Arch. The roadway is crowded with traffic that has a holiday appearance compared with the vehicular bustle of the early months of the year. London is the pleasantest and the most wretched town in the world. On a dark, wet day, with the mud of countless wheels churned into paste, it might well become associated in the mind of the French traveller with suicide and murder. But on a sunny day in June, it is a gay, picturesque, soul-inspiring city. On this summer morning in question, Oxford Street merges into the Bayswater Road with a merry clatter of horses' hoofs and the whirl of every description of wheel. Omnibus, barouche, Victoria, family carriage, hansom cab, commercial

van, and the daring bicycle, roll along in pleasant accord. No cabman tries to run down another when the sun is bright and the roads are in good condition. 'Bus drivers and cabbies vie with each other in the brightness of their button-holes. A troop of guards gives the traffic a telling touch of colour, and the music of a coaching horn is heard above the rush and rattle of the general traffic. The trees in the park are decorated with their earliest leaves. Children are trooping through the Marble Arch in company with well-dressed nurses, who pause to answer the smiling recognitions of her Majesty's household warriors. The fine houses fronting the park are decorated with flowers, and some of them have put forth their outer-blinds.

The little paradise of the successful actor in Orme Square is not the least inviting of the many pleasant houses right and left of it. The windows are open, the flower-boxes are full of radiant colour, and the forecourt is white with hearthstone polish, and yellow with tulip-beds. It is the summer following the West Midland trip, and my host, for the twentieth time, has complimented me upon the pen-and-ink sketch that followed the "one night only." *Apropos* of this, we had already discussed the notion of a volume of reminiscences.

"If you were ever to write my life," he said, "that would be the way to do it."

"Yes?" I replied, more or less interrogatively, "but I should want the run of your papers, diaries, and letters." He had nothing in that way, he said, but George had "lots of newspaper cuttings and things." For years after this conversation, and literally at intervals of years, until the latter end of 1886, we talked of anecdotes and reminiscences until I at last bound myself to a strict but liberal taskmaster in the great trade of newspapers and books—Tillotson by name—to begin this work at a certain date; and then it was that George woke up to the necessity of looking over his papers. At Sheffield we made an appointment to meet in town, and "you shall have everything I have got with the greatest pleasure in the world." The few weeks between that time and our appointment to meet quickly slipped away, but I never saw George Loveday again; he died not suddenly, for he had been ailing during several months, but death at all times is unexpected, and his taking off was a great shock to Toole, and a great grief to others still nearer and dearer to him. "A good fellow, a faithful steward, and a true friend," Toole wrote to me in a notification of his death.

George Loveday[1] had for many years been Toole's right hand, managing his business affairs,

[1] The late George Loveday.—To the Editor of the "Era."

Sir,—Our memories are shorter, perhaps, in matters theatrical than in most affairs. It is true we have a word of praise for the actor we don't very well remember, and for the play we saw as youngsters and didn't quite understand; but for what happens in our own time while we ourselves are busy and alert, well—'twas yesterday, dear heart! we had quite forgotten! I see that George Loveday was manager for Mr. Toole for some years, died much respected, and—that's all. Many can relate much more of the Loveday brothers (George and Henry) than I, and have known them longer; but in the Christmas bustle the matter may get put aside. May I remind your readers that before George Loveday was manager for Mr. Toole, or his brother Henry for Mr. Irving, they were managers on their own account, operatic *entrepreneur*, and fiddlers? It was the two brothers Loveday who years ago first introduced *Faust* in English to England. George managed the undertaking, Henry fiddled and beat time. Henry, however, can speak for himself still.

But what should concern us a little now is that George Loveday, just gone, was the pioneer of the present school of acting-management—the school which replaces the not-too-civil gentleman who was generally "somewhere about" the theatre, and when not toadying his manager or keeping an appointment at a neighbouring hotel, was exercising his sluggish brain as to whom it was politic to put on or to take off the free list. George Loveday was not of this kidney (some credit to him, considering the period at which he started), but was a quick, shrewd, courteous man of business; in the front of the theatre a genial host, in his office a busy brain. Handling a property so valuable as Mr. Toole, he brought to bear upon it a keen and original intelligence. With his precious burden he plunged into diminutive towns which had never dreamed of

travelling with him not only as agent but as friend, devoted to his interests, and to the last in affectionate relations with him. Prior to his engagement with Toole, he and his brother, Mr. H. J. Loveday, had been managers on their own account. They were among the first to introduce English opera to the public, both excellent

anything in the form of public entertainment beyond a reading by a half-audible vicar, or an hour with a peripatetic wizard. He almost smothered these places with "Toole is Coming," until, in self-defence, as it were, the inhabitants rose as one man, and—went to see what Toole did when he came. Out of one astonished town went Loveday into another, never waiting for a revulsion of provincial apathy or the exhaustion of the bucolic purse. But he returned with his "Koh-i-nûr" again and again, converting what were—speaking theatrically—swamps into pastures; and we, many years afterwards, graze there now.

The work which this sort of game necessitated told upon him very severely. He was gouty by inheritance, and I have heard that he has often been transferred from the railway carriage to a bath-chair. He knew "Bradshaw" by heart. We all do now, but there was a time when "Bradshaw" was a synonym for mystery and madness—it was then George Loveday's alphabet.

Poor fellow! His handsome head, his pleasant smile, his immaculate shirt-bosom, will be much missed. Years ago he was good-naturedly nicknamed "the Prince" because of his good looks. The reason might well have gone deeper. He was a prince of good fellows at home and abroad, always generous, courtly, and sincere.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

ARTHUR W. PINERO.

St. John's Wood Road, *Christmas Day*, 1887.

musicians, and belonged to a well-known theatrical family. Their father acted with Edmund Kean, and their mother, who sat at the bedside of poor George when he died, had played with Mrs. Siddons. The old lady is over ninety, her faculties undimmed, and no mother could have had a more devoted son than the fine fellow whom she has had the affliction to see carried to his grave.

III.

Mr. Herman Merivale, collaborating with his wife in the authorship and production of *The Butler* and *The Don*, naturally saw a great deal of Mr. George Loveday, and the following lines which appeared in the *Spectator* are worthy both of their author and his subject :—

GEORGE LOVEDAY.

[OBIIT ÆT. 52, DECEMBER, 1887.]

THE sapless leaves fell in the drear December
In mourning on the dull, inverted clod;
And the few faithful friends who must remember,
With head uncovered the sad surface trod.

Ay, surface! light as the loose earth above him
Are the weak bonds that held the spirit in;
So for all those who dead or living love him,
From out the grave springs a new sense of kin.

We knew him as he was,—so true and steady,
So tender, where the best might well be hard;
At a friend's call so ever strong and ready,
That none might overcount our dear regard.

For him at least, we said, the sun of summer
Should lighten up the funeral's dark array;
To him should Death come as a radiant comer,
When the bright world makes early holiday.

So spake our wisdom; but a wiser said it
In words low whispered through the winter's chill,—
"Awake the ears that hear, and yet can credit
The living message, quick for mortals still.

"When the dull earth lies brown and shrivelled round you
And hope herself seems for the time half-dead,
And the warm summer that caressed and crowned you
Such short time syne, has vanished overhead,—

"When the cold stars look palely on the clearing,
And the white moon but shivers all alone,
And the brief day, in long night disappearing,
Paints her grey canvas in a monotone,—

"When old and new year part in sharp abruption,
So yet things mortal and corrupt shall be,
Till this corruptible wear incorruption,
This mortal put on immortality.

"No fitter hour for the disprisoned spirit
To burst its bondage and its freedom gain,
And from the Testament of old inherit
The great immunity from loss and pain."

Something we felt of this; and through the sorrow
Something of comfort in the whisper found,
And of the past a future seemed to borrow
For him we laid, untimely, in the ground.

Dead—half-a-century old! A mere derision
To little bodies made of little clay,
But what to Him, in whose majestic vision
A thousand years are but as yesterday?

Learn from our lost who can, one for another,
The generous moral of the will to bless,
And gather all that may, brother to brother,
The lesson of his watchful kindliness.

Little we know; but what we know is certain;
The revolution of December's wheel
Behind the black but ever-rising curtain
Doth but the promises of May reveal.

So mystic Death came in her disc of glory,
The message of the snowdrift sent to bring;
To us—the winter-memory of a story,
To him—the priceless herald of the spring.

*January 9th.* HERMAN MERIVALE.

But I am taking the reader far beyond the date of this chapter, and find it impossible not to do so, since I am writing it literally with the sound of funeral bells in my ears. Had not this work been announced and the date of its publication fixed, I should have been inclined to postpone it, under the depressing influence of the solemn cancelling of my appointment with George Loveday; but time and tide, and printers and newspapers, must go on; and we will therefore try and pull ourselves together, as we do in the playhouse for the comedy that follows the more serious scenes, and so get back to Orme Square on that sunny summer morning ten years ago.

IV.

THE windows were open. A thrush was singing in an adjacent tree. A sweet perfume of flowers came in with an occasional soft warm breeze. There was an artistic litter of manuscripts, books, letters, and ornamental inkstands, paper-knives, blotting-pads, and photographs, on the writing-table of the host's study.

Toole entered in dressing-gown and slippers, and, never having smoked in his life, it was characteristic of him to be also wearing a smoking-cap. There was an indication of grey in his thick dark curly hair, but he looked years younger than his age, his eyes bright, and his face ruddy with health. His manner, as you know, is free and unconstrained, and he is one of those pleasant fellows who seem to carry about them an atmosphere of high spirits. It is a face of singular mobility, and full of that kind of power which commands success—a well-knit forehead, strong chin, grey eyes, a large mouth and a long upper lip. Toole would have succeeded in almost any line of work he might have undertaken, which above all things would require pluck, push, industry, sincerity of motive and an appreciation of the vagaries of public taste. But his instinct directed him rightly when it took him to the

theatre, where, added to these qualities, he has great mimetic power and a supreme sense of humour.

"I don't often come down in my dressing-gown," he said, "but the truth is, Albery has been here reading a play to me and he came a little early. By the way, he was telling me rather a good story against himself. He's a wonderful chap to go about getting shaved, always seems to be going in somewhere to be shaved, has a mania for it. It was at Margate the other day, and the barber was a cockney and fond of the theatres. 'Jest come down from town?' he inquired. 'Yes,' said Albery. 'Seen this yere new piece of Halbery's?' 'Yes.' 'Well, he's making a pretty fool of hisself!' 'Who?' asked Albery. 'Why, this yere Halbery: he's a pretty dramatist, a hintroducing Cremorne on the stage, and making hout it's from the French. I calls it a swindle. It's a swindle if it is French; and it's a swindle to say so if it ain't; but everybody knows as Cremorne's Hinglish, and a nice hawful affair, too, to get a hintroducing of it to hour wives and families. I should like to kick that Halbery!' 'You'd better shave him,' said Albery; 'it will pay you better.' And the Margate cockney does not know to this day whom he was criticizing and lathering so freely.

"It reminded me of a rebuff I once had. I was doing a double turn for a benefit at a little theatre, and arrived partly dressed for the 'Dodger'. The doorkeeper was a new man, didn't know me, and wouldn't let me in as Toole; so I said, 'Well, I'm Toole's dresser.' 'Ah, that's a 'oss of another colour; why didn't you say so afore?' and in I went."

V.

"But talking of stories that rather tell against the narrator, I don't know anything much more amusing than the incidents of my last two birthdays. My son Frank, as you know, is studying for the bar. He said Lewis Wingfield had invited the Lord Chief Baron and the Attorney-General for Ireland, who were both fond of theatres, to sup at his place in Maida Vale, and that he hoped I would join them. The night mentioned was my birthday, and I reminded Frank that as a rule I generally supped at home after the theatre on my birthday; but he said Wingfield was anxious to do him a turn at the bar, the Lord Chief Baron and the Attorney-General were both old friends of his, and it would be a great thing to have the benefit of their influence.

"Wingfield afterwards called on me and said something to the same effect, and of course

Frank's interest was paramount with me, and I accepted.

"I had had two performances, one at the Crystal Palace and one at the Gaiety, and I was both tired and hungry when I got to Wingfield's house—a lovely place he had in Maida Vale, with a fine studio, and all in the choicest æsthetic style. At the entrance to the studio there was a small room, very comfortable, but on this occasion rather dark—Wingfield's artistic idea of tone and effect, of course. There was a nice fire. A coloured lamp or two were burning dimly, and there were lots of curtains.

"When I arrived, I found Frank already there. Wingfield introduced me at once to the Lord Chief Baron and the Attorney-General. The Baron was sitting in a low chair by the fire, and the Attorney-General, a fat gentleman, was talking to Frank, but in very guttural tones. He was rather a pompous person, as men with big 'corporations' often are, and he carried his Falstaffian weight as if he were proud of it. He was not, I thought, over-polite to me, but as Frank seemed to be getting on with him all right, I did not mind. He need not, however, I thought, have turned his back upon me after saying how do you do, as if how do you do had stuck in his throat and me with it; but the Lord Chief Baron

seemed as if he noticed it and tried to make it up to me by being very polite, only the worst of the Baron was that he had an awful cough; one of those coughs which takes a man right in the middle of a remark and breaks him down—a gasping, choking cough which shook his frame and made me feel very sorry for him. He was an odd-looking man, thin and spare, in a long coat which came to his feet, had thin spare hair, a bit of white whisker, and wore a velvet skull-cap; he was a learned-looking chap, and a pleasant fellow to talk to, no doubt, if it had not been for that awful cough.

"'Yes, yes,' he said, 'your son' (cough, cough), 'is going to the' (cough, cough), 'bar; yes, yes, we must' (cough, cough), 'help him;' and before I could thank him he went off into something nearly approaching convulsions. I suggested a lozenge from which I had myself found benefit.

"'Is your lozenge' (coughffy, coughffy, etchew ew), 'any good for an influen—' (coughffy, coughffy) 'za cold.'

"'Nothing's any good for that but a good dinner,' said Old Grumpy with the big 'corporation' and the bad manners. You know my weakness for studying oddities of character; well, for the first few minutes, tired and hungry as I was, I

noted the peculiarities of Wingfield's two distinguished guests. Old fellows on the bench have often marked peculiarities, but they were certainly, I thought, the rummest couple I had ever seen, though they bore themselves with a certain amount of dignity. Old Grumpy, as I christened him in my own mind, had quite the dictatorial style of a judge who might at any moment, don't you know, commit you for contempt of court, or in a play, consign you to the deepest dungeon of the castle moat. He had an odd manner of turning his back upon one and swelling himself out. He was in evening dress, wore a frill to his shirt, had a rather high forehead, a slight matter of side whisker, and he spoke in a deep voice and with great deliberation—a sort of Sir Oracle. But I soon got tired of studying the Attorney-General, especially as I said before that he did not seem inclined to be very polite to me,—evidently one of those swells who look down upon actors, I thought; and then I began to wish I had not come and found myself saying to myself, 'Oh Lord, what an evening is before me with these coughing, grumpy fellows! Fancy having to sit between them at supper and get up conversations.' The thought of it maddened me—of course it was very nice of Wingfield, to ask them in Frank's interest, but I devoutly wished he had let me off. I had only

been in this purgatorial room I suppose ten minutes, but it seemed an age.

"The Baron rose up from his seat presently, not without some difficulty, and tried to say something about having seen me act: 'Enjoy the theatre' (cough, cough) 'very much, your "Paul Pry" capi—' (etchew, cough, etchew) 'tal!'

"I don't disdain a compliment; never knew an actor who did; but I was so worried and depressed with this old gentleman's cough and the other's supercilious grunts, that I began to think of slipping out of the house somehow, I was so miserable.

"Suddenly Wingfield said something in a whisper to the Attorney-General, who said, 'Yes, yes, capital,' and began to laugh 'ah, ah,' not like the monks of old, but like a heavy villain who had got the hero of the drama in a hole. Presently the 'ah, ah,' grew a little more cheerful. Wingfield whispered a second time in the stout Attorney's ear. 'Capital! The funniest thing I ever heard—ah, ah, ah—must tell the Baron.'

"As the Baron struggled to his feet, Wingfield drew my attention to something at the other end of the room, and all at once I received a whacking blow on the back. I turned round to see a sight that really terrified me, for I thought that under the influence of despair and disappointment I had gone suddenly crazy.

There was the fat Attorney-General and the slim Baron, hand-in-hand, curvetting round me like a brace of maniacs, and yelling in the most discordant tones, 'Whack-fol-de-row-dow-fol-lo-de-riddle-raddle-whack-fol-de-row-dow-fol-de-rol-de-ray.' And as they sung and danced they banged me familiarly on the back.

"In a whirl of wonder and amazement, I tried to retreat, and got as far as the stairway that led to the studio, when suddenly the curtains were withdrawn, and there I saw my old friends Lowne, George Loveday, and one or two others in a group, roaring with laughter, my dear boy Frank splitting his sides.

"I then turned towards the two old legal luminaries; they both confronted me, and in one voice calmly said, 'Johnny, dear fellow, we wish you many happy returns of the day!' And only then did I discover that my friend the Attorney-General was David James, and the Lord Chief Baron, Tom Thorne, who thereupon wished me many happy returns of the day, and thrust upon me a couple of beautiful remembrances of the time.

"I never was more completely sold. They acted splendidly. Even if I had had any suspicion, I could not have thought of James and Thorne as the impersonators of legal power, because they were at the time playing in *Our Boys*, and I had hurried up from the theatre, and

yet they were at Wingfield's when I arrived, and looked as if they might have been there for a week. They would not, however, have been so successful, I think, if it had not been for Frank, who was one of the conspirators against me, and who knew, the dear fellow, that I should enjoy the fun as much as any one of them, when once the thing was over. I need not say that Wingfield gave us a capital supper; but I was rash enough to say that I would bet anything they would not sell me on my next birthday, and everybody said they should think not indeed—once bitten twice shy."

VI.

It will be interesting in this place to state that the Hon. Lewis Wingfield, well known in literary, artistic, and journalistic circles, is the third son of the late Lord Powerscourt. Declining the opportunities that belong to a younger son in the army and navy, the learned professions, and diplomacy, he ran away from College, went upon the stage, and made a tour of the Irish provinces with great success, the company including Mr. Addison, his clever daughters Fanny and Carlotta, Fred Robson, Fred Dewar, and the two Webbs. They played the legitimate drama and burlesque, Mr. Wingfield being very successful in eccentric

comedy. In due time he came to London and played with Walter Montgomery at the Haymarket. He was the "Roderigo," with Mrs. Kendal as "Desdemona," Ira Aldridge playing the "Moor" to Montgomery's "Iago." Mr. Wingfield had acted a diversified round of characters, and was on the eve of signing a long engagement for Australia and America, when his mother intervened, and he settled down at Antwerp for three years as an art student. Henceforward his career was none the less exciting than it promised to be as an actor. He joined the Prussians in the Franco-Prussian war, half artist, half surgeon, and had many adventures; afterwards became war-correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*, was offered the French Legion of Honour for his services in the American Ambulance, and during the Commune was the accredited correspondent of the *Times*. Later he has written novels and plays. He decorated and mounted *Romeo and Juliet* for Miss Mary Anderson at the Lyceum. His last appearance on the stage was as "Orlando" in *As You Like It* at the Calvert benefit in Manchester, when Lady Theodore Martin took the part of "Rosalind;" Miss Kate Pattison, "Celia"; Mr. Tom Taylor, "Adam;" and Mr. Herman Merivale, "Touchstone." During the last few years he has travelled pretty well all over the world, having made long

journeys in China and Japan—an eventful life and a merry one.

VII.

"When my next birthday came round," continued my host, "I was not acting that night, and Arthur Stirling, Robert Wyndham, and one or two friends, had been dining with me. About twelve o'clock some of them were going home, and I was saying good-night to them in the hall, when a cabman came up to the door and said, 'Mr. Toole, I've called for that yere seven-and-six!'

"'That yere seven-and-six, my man,' I replied, 'what yere seven-and-six?'

'For the hother night, when I druv you 'ome and you'd got no change, and said I was to come for it.'

"'Go along,' I said, 'you must not try that kind of thing on me; I never allowed a cabman to go away unpaid.'

"'Well I don't know about that,' the man replied, 'I wants my money, that's all I knows.'

"'You wants your money!' I said, 'and that's all you knows! If you are impertinent you'll have the police, that's what you'll have.'

"At this moment another cabman, very much muffled in the traditional cape, stepped from among a cluster of cabs that had assembled, I

supposed, for the convenience of my guests, and without any invitation, joined in the conversation.

"'Why don't you pay the man his money,' he said; and, to embarrass me all the more, my wife came into the hall and whispered in a loud voice, 'Yes, John, pay the man and let him go; I daresay it is quite correct, and that you have forgotten it.'

"'Forgotten it!' I exclaimed, I fear a little indignantly, 'I could not possibly have forgotten such a thing.'

"'My mate remembers the sukumstance,' said the cabman, jerking his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the Jehu in the capes.

"'Remembers it, vy of course I does!' said the other. 'You took the gent hup at the Garrick Club, you drives 'im and another gent, a taller than 'im, and he pulls you up in Albermarle Street, and the tall gent he walks round into Grafton Street, and then you 'as the order to drive to Orme Square—remembers, vy, I could be sworn on it at any police-court in London!'

"This rather bothered me for a moment, the mention of the clubs and the knowledge that I had occasionally dropped a distinguished tragedian at his chambers in Grafton Street. Seeing that I hesitated, my wife again suggested that I should pay the man. But that made me obstinate again. I could not bear my guests to have the faintest suspicion that I had actually been trying to bilk a

cabman, and they were in the hall by this time, every one of them—several ladies among the number, my wife's friends, having come down from the dressing-room with their cloaks on, ready to go home. 'Pay him, John, and let him go,' my wife whispered, and somehow the tone of her advice so strongly suggested I was in the wrong, that it quite upset me. 'I will not pay him and let him go! It is an attempt at imposition.'

"As I expressed this final determination, a hansom drove into the square and pulled up on the scene.

"'Vy here's Bill Mathers,' said the first cabman. 'He'll remember it, I know, 'cos I borrowed five bob of him on the strength of it.'

"Whereupon Bill Mathers dropped down from his hansom and said, 'Is it about the gent you druv from the Garrick—the seven-and-six affair?'

"'Yas,' said the first cabman, and 'That's the ticket,' remarked the brute in the capes.

"'It is an impertinent attempt at swindling, and I will not be imposed upon,' I said, when a new comer arrived on the scene.

"'What is it, Johnny?' asked the new comer, who was no other than Lewis Wingfield, 'Just passing by, couldn't believe my ears when I heard you talking about police and swindling, what is it?'

"But before I could explain the man in the capes thrust a parcel into my arms, and the hansom

cabby pushed another upon the top of that, and they both said together, 'We wish you many happy returns of the day!'

MESSRS. JAMES AND THORNE IN "OUR BOYS."

"The man in the capes was David James, and the hansom cabby was Tom Thorne.[2] They had

[2] The names of Messrs. James and Thorne will always be

remembered a certain defiant remark on my previous birthday; I had forgotten it; but I keep with pride and pleasure the handsome gifts, a desk and a punch-bowl, which the two clever cabmen thrust into my arms at the height of my rage and bewilderment.

"It turned out that the first cabman was the genuine article; they had coached him in his part,

associated with the phenomenal success of *Our Boys*, which was originally produced under their joint management at the Vaudeville Theatre. Mr. James played "Perkyn Middlewick" and Mr. Thorne was "Talbot Champneys," both very notable performances. *Our Boys* not only brought them fame and fortune, but it realized something over twenty thousand pounds for Mr. Duck, a provincial manager, who bought the country rights for five hundred pounds. Mr. David James made his first appearance on the stage at the Princess's Theatre during the management of Charles Kean. He achieved his first real success in a revival of *The Heir-at-Law* in 1865, sustaining the part of "Zekiel Homespun," his natural, unaffected manner coming as a surprise to the critics, who had previously only seen him in burlesque. Mr. Thorne first attracted the attention of the public in 1862 in a comic play entitled *Tom's Life*, in which he impersonated a number of comic characters. He afterwards became a member of the stock company at the Strand, and latterly he has done notable work at his own theatre in a series of revivals of old comedies, his latest success being "Parson Adams" in Mr. Buchanan's version of *Tom Jones*. His former colleague, Mr. James, at the same time has added strength to Mr. Wyndham's company at the Criterion, and his "Alderman Ingot" in *David Garrick* has justified the promise he gave in the first serious part of his earliest days.

and very well he played it. David had been seated on the box of a four-wheeler by arrangement with the driver, and Thorne had for the first time in his life driven a hansom cab, which he did with a dash that would have deceived anybody—and his make-up was first-rate—coming round the corner at the right dramatic moment, while in the background, like Mephisto in the play, was their former confederate, Lewis Wingfield."

VIII.

"We were speaking of Robson," I said. "You knew him very well?"

"Yes," he replied.

"And admired him as an actor?"

"Tremendously," he replied, with much energy of manner. "I used to see a great deal of him in Dublin, long before he came to London. He was a popular comedian in Dublin when I received my first engagement there. He was at the Royal, I was at the other theatre. He was a special favourite in *Boots at the Swan*. Whatever the manager at one theatre put up, the other did, and I was playing *Boots at the Swan* at the same time as Robson. I got to know him very well. I used to go and have tea with him, and he was very kind to me, often gave me hints, and took an interest in whatever I did. I was with him

when he received an offer from old Farren to go to London. He had played at the Grecian before he went to Dublin, but never at the west end of London. Farren's offer was for the Olympic, and I went to the station with him and saw him off. He had a wonderful talent, and was a very remarkable actor. There were flashes in his mock-tragedy that were magnificent, overpowering. I sometimes thought he lacked repose; not that I would venture to criticize him even to that extent, he was so great a genius. I think if he had done a little gardening it would have done him good."

Then my host repeated the incident of Haverstock Hill, which is recorded early in this chapter, and drifted into other matters which I propose to hold back until the chief narrator in this collaboration is in a frame of mind to sit down and tell me the story of his life. Meanwhile it is pleasant to "hover," as "the Butler" would say, around our subject, and collect together the good things which need not wait for place or preferment.

## IX.

"You told a capital story at the Theatrical Fund dinner last year," I suggested.

"About the Cratchit piece at the Adelphi?" he said interrogatively.

"Yes," I answered.

"It is a first-rate story; I told it to Dickens shortly after it occurred, and he was quite touched by it. What a fine-hearted, kindly, merry gentleman he was! He once told me he had at one time almost made up his mind to be an actor. I said it was a good thing for some of us and a splendid thing for literature that he changed his mind. He seemed to possess everything that goes to make success on the stage, in comedy, especially high-class comedy; and I never knew any one with such a keen eye for character, with such a quick appreciation of a joke."

While he was talking he was fishing among his papers for the Cratchit story.

"Ah, here it is in print, don't often get my stories into the dignity of print, except when George drops one into the ear of a critic or a friendly editor; you can read it for yourself."

I was not going to be denied the pleasure of hearing him tell the story, and I returned him the reprint.

"A good story is never old, though print gives it a familiar kind of look," he said. "It was when I was playing 'Bob Cratchit' in *The Christmas Carol* at the Adelphi, under Mr. Webster's management, and every night at eight, for forty nights, I had to carve a goose and a

plum-pudding. Mr. Webster provided a real goose and a real plum-pudding, which were served smoking hot for Mrs. Cratchit and the seven little Cratchetts, of course including Tiny Tim.

"The children always had enormous portions given them, and all ate heartily every night; but what really troubled me was the conduct of the little girl who played 'Tiny Tim.' That child's appetite appalled me.

"I could not help noticing the extraordinary rapidity with which she consumed what I gave her, and she looked so wan and thin, and so pitiful, that her face used positively to haunt me.

"I used to say to myself before I began, 'Well, Tiny Tim shall have enough this time, at all events,' and I piled her plate more and more each evening, until, I remember, she had on one occasion nearly half the bird, besides potatoes and apple-sauce. It puzzled me to know how she could even carry it away to the fireplace, where she sat on a low stool, in accordance with the story, much less eat it.

"To my amazement she carried it off and cleared her plate as quickly and as eagerly as ever, pushing forward for plum-pudding with the others. I grew alarmed, and spoke to Mrs. Alfred Mellon, who was playing 'Mrs. Cratchit,' respecting this strange phenomenon.

"'I don't like it,' I said; 'I can't conceive where a poor, delicate little thing like that puts the food. Besides, although I like the children to enjoy a treat'—and how they kept on enjoying it for forty nights was a mystery, for I got into such

"TINY TIM," WHO ATE THE GOOSE.

a condition that if I dined at a friend's house and goose was on the table, I regarded it as a personal affront—I said, referring to Tiny Tim, 'I don't like greediness; and it is additionally repulsive in a refined-looking, delicate little thing like this; besides it destroys the sentiment of the

situation—and when I, as Bob, ought to feel most pathetic, I am always wondering where the goose and the pudding are, or whether anything serious in the way of a fit will happen to Tiny Tim before the audience, in consequence of her unnatural gorging.'

"Mrs. Mellon laughed at me at first, but eventually we decided to watch Tiny Tim together.

"We watched as well as we could, and the moment Tiny Tim was seated and began to eat, we observed a curious shuffling movement at the stage-fireplace, and everything that I had given her, goose and potatoes and apple-sauce, disappeared behind the sham stove, the child pretending to eat as hearty as ever from the empty plate.

"When the performance was over, Mrs. Mellon and myself asked the little girl what became of the food she did not eat, and, after a little hesitation, frightened lest she should get into trouble, which we assured her could not happen, she confessed that her little sister (I should mention that they were the children of one of the scene-shifters), waited on the other side of the stage fireplace for the supplies, and that the whole family enjoyed a hearty supper every night out of the plentiful portions to which I, as Bob, had assisted Tiny Tim.

"Dickens was very much interested in the incident. When I had finished, he smiled a little sadly, I thought, and then, shaking me by the hand, he said, 'Ah, you ought to have given her the whole goose.'

"When I knew Dickens sufficiently well, having played one or two of his characters, it occurred to me that perhaps he might write a special little piece for me. I called upon him to propose this; felt a little delicacy about doing it; suppose my diplomacy was rather transparent, for he at once anticipated what I had to propose, and said, 'No, I haven't time to write plays; my little books give me all the work I care to do, and are very profitable: but it will interest you to know that when I was writing "Great Expectations," with a view to the possibilities of a dramatic version of the story, I had you in my eye all the time for "Joe Gargery" and Ben Webster for the Convict.'"

## X.

THE Orme Square house was full of interesting curios and pictures, more or less associated with Mr. Toole's career, but I propose to describe these and other things of a later date in a sketch of his present home, not forgetting his dressing-

room at the theatre in King William Street. In leaving Orme Square for the present, I feel that I cannot do better justice to its pleasant domestic atmosphere than by quoting the concluding passages of "Celebrities at Home," in which the family sentiment of the actor's home is so delicately suggested, the reality of its domesticity so deftly recorded.

"Without presuming to touch deeply upon private life, we may be permitted to say that the subject of this paper is essentially a domestic man, and so devoted a husband and father as to be generally accompanied by his family when his professional engagements necessitate more than a short absence from London. When Mr. Toole visited America, for example, Mrs. Toole and his son and daughter, and the latter's governess, were added to the professional fellow-travellers it was necessary to take; and after we have shaken hands that afternoon, with a merry parting jest, the thought occurs, how widely different the experience has been from much that one has read of comedians off the boards. Hypochondriacal and gloomy creatures occasionally, whose fun and animal spirits left them with their stage-dress; or dissolute profligates, whose irregularities were a proverb, and whose homes were a disgrace, the remembrance of their careers brings into strong relief the cheerful brightness of the happy house

we have left, which might be singled out as a typical example of a prosperous English middle-class home, in which the happiness of its master centres. The steady, intelligent young fellow working away creditably for his destined profession; the charming little girl who is as the apple of her father's eye, and who is the first auditor of many a playful stroke of humour which afterwards becomes famous; the abundant evidences of the thoughtful and affectionate care with which the comedian's tastes and wishes are studied; and above all his own happiness, enjoyment, and pride in and with his family, and his passionate yearning for home when he is away—all linger pleasantly in the memory when one recalls that merry afternoon with Toole, and the ceaseless outpour of amazing stories, illustrated by choicer comic acting than the stage has seen, wherewith it was enriched."

## III.

## SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

A Reception at Orme Square—Mr. and Mrs. Toole's Silver Wedding—Pleasant hours after midnight—Mr. Irving's first experience as a public reader on his own account—Toole at Dunfermline—"A 'Norrible Tale" in chapel—"Lo! the poor Indian!"—Complimentary groans—Toole's age—Michael Garner on the stage and off—Old Garente and the bandits—David James's Whitechapel romance—Hollingshead and the birthplace of Podgers—Low salaries and high art—Actors and their friends—Artistic society—The shadow.

I.

The pleasant spirit of the closing picture of the previous chapter follows me in my last sunny memory of Orme Square. It was on April 27th, 1879, that Mr. and Mrs. Toole celebrated their silver wedding. Over a hundred friends accepted the invitation of the host and hostess to an evening reception. The guests were representative ladies and gentlemen, some of them already celebrated in the world of Literature and Art, others who have since achieved fame and prosperity. Each of them came with either a bouquet of flowers or a gift of

silver plate, or both, and each might have wondered where the hostess would find room for another bouquet, or another less perishable souvenir ; for quite early in the evening every sideboard, shelf, mantelpiece, table, seemed to be gay with flowers, or white with silver. Some of the tributes of love and esteem were accompanied with pleasant conceits in verse ; others were signalized by serious and touching lines, such, for example, as the silver token from Mr. Clement Scott. When the rooms were crowded with guests, it was suggested that the poet should read his verses, whereupon he recited the following stanzas with excellent effect :—

To John Lawrence Toole on his "Silver Wedding."

A Silver Wedding! Johnnie, is it true,
For five-and-twenty years in chains you've sported?
Time, the Avenger, stays his pranks with you,
And makes you younger than when first you courted.
The best of fathers to the kindest son,
On wife and daughter rays of sunshine shedding;
Paterfamilias and friend in one,
This is the crown of Johnnie's Silver Wedding!

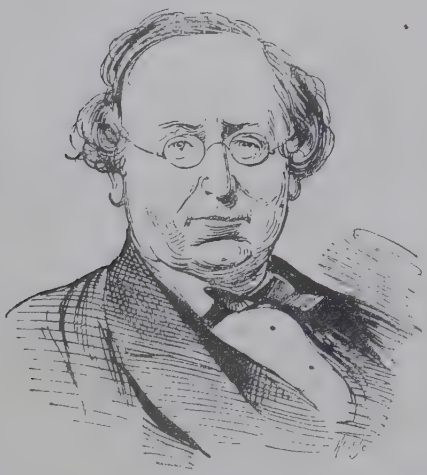
"A Silver Wedding for a heart of gold,"
Hark to the echo of the voices round you!
Brother and friend in one sweet nature rolled,
We find you true—as we have ever found you.
Take then, upon this day of perfect bliss,
My humble gift—may you and yours outlive it;
Its greatest value to your friend is this—
That he has lived to know you—and to give it!

II.

This recitation led to others, recitations to ballads, and ballads to Reminiscences; but the Reminiscences came later in the evening, I might say earlier in the morning, for the hundred odd guests had dwindled down to a dozen, when men began to talk "shop" and compare notes about their varied experiences. You who know how evening receptions in artistic society usually end need not be told that the last two hours are invariably very pleasant, that, in fact, you have waited for them; that they include, in the way of refreshment, the cigar you have been dying to smoke; and that the little company will then consist, most likely, of a handful of the host's oldest friends and yours, as they did on this occasion. Among them I remember Mr. George Grossmith,[1] Bow Street reporter for

[1] "London buries this week an interesting and somewhat remarkable man in Mr. George Grossmith, the lecturer and reader. Sixty years of age, the deceased gentleman began life as a reporter on the Reading *Mercury*. Through the friendly interest of Mr. Walter he was transferred to the *Times*, and became the Bow Street reporter of that journal. He never made a public appearance on a leading London platform, though he often lectured at suburban institutions; but in the country he held for many years, and up to the day of his death, the very foremost place as a lecturer and reader. He devoted himself chiefly to the interpretation of Dickens, and in that line he did better than Dickens himself. His 'Lecture on Lecturers' was

the *Times*, and lecturer to all the best of provincial institutes; his two sons, the eldest of whom was just scoring his first successes in Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's Operas, the youngest beginning to paint promising pictures; Mr. Henry Irving, who



MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH, THE LECTURER.

was in the first year of his management of the Lyceum Theatre; Mr. Arthur Cecil, who had been

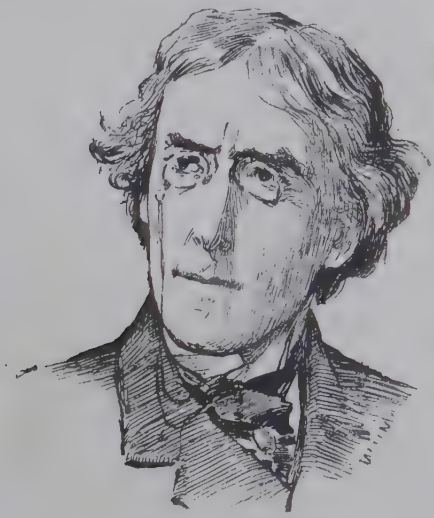
also very popular, and throughout provincial England he was admired and respected. An intimate associate of the late George Dawson, he had in London a large circle of acquaintances and friends. His modest little house on Haverstock

making a special advance in his art in the character of "Baron Stein," I think in *Diplomacy;* Mr. Lionel Brough (the survivor of a clever trio of brothers); Mr. John Hollingshead, author, journalist, and manager of the Gaiety Theatre; Mr. David James, Mr. Thomas Thorne (*Our Boys*), Mr. John Billington, and several others.

One's memory begins to be dimmed in regard to matters of detail even after ten years; but there are incidents of the night, scraps of stories and characteristic anecdotes, which it is not difficult to recall. Talking of the hopes, ambitions, and enterprises of his early life, prompted thereto by the conversation running in that direction, Irving mentioned his first attempt at "turning an honest penny as a public reader" at a little town near Edinburgh. It was during an engagement he was

Hill has echoed to the merriment of many a pleasant reception. George Grossmith had the privilege of living long enough to see his two sons distinguished and prosperous. His eldest boy is well-known as first among the clever troupe of actors who made *Pinafore* famous, and he has no superior as a drawing-room entertainer. His youngest son is Mr. Walter Weedon Grossmith, whose portrait of his father was hung in last year's Academy. Mr. Grossmith was presiding at the Saturday weekly dinner of the Savage Club when he was attacked with apoplexy, and died before he could be removed to his own house. Walter was with him. George was sent for, and came from the stage in *The Pirates of Penzance* to attend his father's dying moments. Mrs. Grossmith arrived too late."—London Correspondent *New York Times*, May 10th, 1880.

filling at the Theatre Royal. There was a holiday "or a night off." He and a friend, determined to utilize the time, hired the Town Hall of the little borough in question. When the night arrived they started off in high spirits. They saw their bills



MR. HENRY IRVING.

here and there announcing their attractive entertainment, but were a little taken aback, when they reached the hall, to find that it was not open. Presently, when the keeper came and lighted the gas, and Irving's friend took his place in the money-taker's box, the Reader strolled carelessly

on the other side of the street to watch the audience rush in; he strolled some time, the hour struck for the entertainment to commence, but not a soul had arrived; one person, I think, put in an appearance eventually and received his money back, and the enterprising impresario and his star returned to Edinburgh, saying very little by the way, and rarely afterwards mentioning the bitterness of their disappointment.

"The Town Hall wouldn't hold them now, Henry," remarked the host. "Hollingshead would take the risk, and try it for a week, wouldn't you, John?"

"Yes," said the judicious one ("Practical John" the Press had christened him), "and make it a certainty for the Reader, money down!"

III.

"It reminds me," said Toole, "of a kind of failure I had at Dunfermline; not exactly a failure, but one of the most curious experiences as an entertainer—what they would call in the classics 'a rum go.' I remember telling Dickens all about it, not so much for the story itself, as an illustration that he had not exaggerated his report of the Committee of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Society.

"It was during my first engagement at Edinburgh. A gentleman called on me from Dunfermline, said he would like me to sing at a concert in that town on a certain day. He had seen me act and must have heard me sing my songs, 'A 'Norrible Tale,' and so on; and I concluded I had hit him, particularly when he said he could offer me a fee of five guineas, and make things generally pleasant for me. Salaries, as you know, were not tremendous in Edinburgh, and these little outside engagements were agreeable tit-bits between the acts, as it were. He was a nice sort of gentleman, very complimentary and evidently desirous that my engagement should be made as comfortable as possible.

"'There will be no piano or band for accompanying you, Mr. Toole, and ye needna dress in costume; just come as ye are, and gie me the names o' the songs ye'd care to sing, so that I can put them in the programme.'

"He spoke with the slightest bit of dialect, the bit that makes the voice and language of a Scotchman so pleasant to the ears of a Southerner.

"'If you're willing, I'll jest sign the engagement the noo,' he said.

"I was willing, he did sign, and I went.

"When I got there I found the concert was in a chapel, one of those hard conventicles which I

always think must make worship rather a cold business, but of course that is a matter of taste. It was in the early evening ; the candles in sconces on the walls just lighted, the formal pulpit rather shadowy, the hard pews containing a scattered audience of old men and women, who looked as if they had had a hard time of it in this wicked world, and who would take a deal of rousing into enthusiasm about anything except in the way of denouncing the depravity and sin of this mortal life. My spirits went down to zero. I looked at a programme that was handed to me, and found that the occasion was the annual soirée of a Total Abstinence Union, and I afterwards learnt that the Union had been split up by dissensions, and that one-half was giving a rival soirée in another part of the town, and that special efforts had been made in the rival entertainment to attract the public. Miss Rainforth was the star at the other place ; I was only one of the stars at this. There was a kind of platform, something that would raise the performers a little above the audience. The pulpit was evidently not going to be used. I felt rather glad at that, because 'A 'Norrible Tale' in the pulpit would have been a little more out of place than 'A 'Norrible Tale' sung from one of the pews. I was awfully bothered, wondering what sort of an affair it would be, and my

curiosity began to get a little the better of my fears of a *fiasco*. I noticed sitting beneath the pulpit a Red Indian, and by his side a something between the Mulberry man and a mob orator. Turning to the programme, I saw that they were 'stars of the evening, beautiful stars,' and my spirits went down again when I noticed that the meeting was to be 'addressed,' and all that sort of thing. After a few words from a gentleman, who rose as the chairman of the meeting—whether it was a short prayer or what I could never make out—tea and cake and oranges were served in the pews, and to a few solemn younger people near the platform. The gentleman who had engaged me moved about on tiptoe; everybody seemed afraid of disturbing everybody else. At length the first speaker spoke again; this time on the benefits of total abstinence, and then introduced Brother So-and-So, the mob-orator gentleman who had been sitting under the pulpit.

"He wore no collar; his coat was closely buttoned about his throat; his hair was long, and a pair of shabby horn eye-glasses were dangling from a faded ribbon at his top button-hole. He told the most awful lies, I think, I ever heard. I remember in particular he dwelt upon a tragic narrative intended to show that in whatever shape a man approached whisky, or whatever he had

to do with it, he was sure to come to grief and sorrow and death. A drunkard went into a cottage one day, where there was a keg of whisky on the shelf. He tried to get at it, and in doing so knocked down a gun which went off and killed him. Then he knew a mother who had been tempted to give a little child whisky for a cold, only a teaspoonful, but that first taste of the fiendish liquor was the seed which grew and grew, and led finally to perdition. The child eventually murdered its own mother.

"Think of any ridiculously ultra-tragic notion which might illustrate the horrors of drink, and nothing can be too tremendous for you to imagine in the mouth of the grim collarless orator who addressed that wonderful Dunfermline temperance society.

"Next came the North-American Indian, who, to my experienced eye, seemed to be nothing more than a gentleman from Houndsditch, attired in the costume of the heroic savage. He spoke the English language with a very remarkable dialect, something, I suppose, between Choctaw and Bevis Marks. He was a wonderful Indian; had a tomahawk and the whole business.

"The audience took everything very seriously; made no demonstration of any kind; groaned now and then, but only in a very subdued way;

and when the chairman rose and announced that Mr. Toole would now sing 'The Melancholy History of Villikins and his Dinah,' not a smile illumined a single face. They all took the announcement seriously, looking forward, no doubt, to some further examples of the perils and dangers and sin of whisky.

"I never felt more wretched in my life. I was very young at this kind of business, at any kind of business, for that matter, very young as a star. But I had always been accustomed to audiences that laughed in the right places. Dunfermline on this occasion took 'The Melancholy History of Villikins and his Dinah' with sighs and remarks of 'deere, deere!' They only regarded the story as another illustration of the horrors of whisky, and when 'Villikins' 'was a-walking in the garden all round, he see his dear Dinah lying dead on the ground, and a cup of cold pison all down by her side, and a *billet dux* stating 'twas of pison she died,' they heaved a sigh that I afterwards tried to imitate as an additional effect for the tragic ending, but I could never touch the depths of that sigh, though at the time I sighed too in sympathy; for I came to the conclusion that I had made an awful failure—the failure of my life. I was young and sensitive, you see, and modest; I sat down without a hand, nothing but groans and sighs.

"The Indian had another turn, and the chairman then announced that Mr. Toole would sing 'A 'Norrible Tale.' The very announcement was received with groans—groans of interest and approbation, not the groans Hollingshead is suggesting to Grossmith—I know you, John!

"Well, I sang the ''Norrible Tale,' and it was received with sympathetic thrills of horror. The fate of that unfortunate family was followed with intense interest, but without the faintest shadow of applause, without a smile, if I may exclude the internal mirth evident on the faces of the Indian and his oratorical pal; the Indian, a most pronounced denizen of Whitechapel, was convulsed with laughter, if the working of his mouth and eyes and the almost apoplectic flush of suppressed force, or apoplexy, that came through his paint were any criterion of his feelings, and the orator turned his face to the wall. I think that my unmistakable confusion and disappointment probably amused them more than the song. Reflecting upon it the next day, I fancied I had detected a glimmer of humorous consciousness about the business in the face of the chairman. I cannot help thinking that he had by this time spotted the secretary's unwise zeal in his engagement of Mr. J. L. Toole; I only know that all the impossible horrors of 'A 'Norrible Tale' with its

'fly on the ceiling whose case was the wust un, blowing itself up with spontaneous combustion,' seemed to go straight home to those sober temperance people; and some of them absolutely wept at it. And when I come to recall the whole affair I don't wonder at it, seeing that they swallowed so easily the stories of my friend the mob orator. Mind you, there was no accompaniment, no piano, no music; and when I sung 'Bob Simmons's Courtship,' with those whistling interludes that you will remember, the North-American Indian found it impossible not to laugh, while once more the mob orator turned his head another way. I caught a twinkle of amusement in the chairman's eye, and two audible smiles on the countenances of two grey-headed, dear old conscientious abstainers. But it was altogether a most extraordinary, not to say a most painful, business.

"A man named Bishop, I remember, sang 'Bonnie Prince Charlie,' and sang it very well; and that was the only effort of the evening that was not serious, except my own.

"When the chairman paid me that five guineas, he put it down without a remark, but he looked daggers at the secretary, who, I have reason to believe, lost his engagement through his too high opinion of my vocal and sentimental qualifications

for a small tea-party. I remember the scene as if it occurred yesterday, although it is over twenty years ago.[2] I wish I could find the programme, I believe I have it somewhere; but, of course, I never saw any announcement or anything about it until I was on the spot."[3]

[2] Looking over one of Mr. Toole's albums of autographs and curiosities, I came upon a copy of the *Dunfermline Monthly Advertiser* of January 13th, 1854, with the following advertisement set forth in double columns upon the front page:—

ANNUAL SOIRÉE.

The Directors of the Dunfermline Total Abstinence Society beg to announce that their Annual Soirée will be held in the Maygate Chapel on the evening of Old Handsel Monday, 16th inst. Doors open at half-past five, chair to be taken at six o'clock.

The meeting will be addressed by J. Critchley, Esq., superintendent of the Glasgow Total Abstinence Mission; Mr. George Easton, agent of the Scottish Temperance League; and in all probability by Owella Powell, a North-American Indian, who is expected to appear in Native Costume.

The music will be conducted by Mrs. Hartley and Mr. John Bishop, of Edinburgh, and

MR. J. L. TOOLE,

The Celebrated Comic Vocalist, of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Tickets, 9*d*., each, to be had, &c.

Full particulars in programmes.

[3] It is desirable to state in this place that a great portion of these Reminiscences have, prior to the present form of publication, appeared simultaneously in many leading newspapers in England, Ireland, Scotland, Australia, India, and America. It is in this way that much of the current literature of these

IV.

A LITTLE jest at the expense of a guest having been referred to, Toole recalled, as an example of

days first sees the light. In the present case the authors have revised the whole of the chapters and added to them very considerably, these two volumes containing at least a third more matter than the original articles in the newspapers. During the course of the serial publication the chronicler has received many kindly suggestions, and here and there the narrative has elicited comment and remark in the press, mostly of a very complimentary character. The Dunfermline incident has, however, called forth both comment and protest. The *Dunfermline Journal*, in quoting the above chapter, refers to it in a leader-note as follows:—

"MR. J. L. TOOLE'S FAILURE IN DUNFERMLINE.—Mr. J. L. Toole's first attempt at concert-singing in Dunfermline was a complete failure. He was announced as the star of the evening, and yet *Hamlet*, played as a comedy, would be nothing to the pitiable appearance he made. Mr. Toole came to tell Dunfermline teetotallers of the olden time all about 'Villikins and Dinah,' but, alas, it turned out that poor Dinah had had a preference for 'twenty drops' of laudanum rather than whisky. The twenty drops proved too much for Dinah, and they proved too much for J. L. T. If the great comedian had only had the 'gumption' to substitute 'a cup of hot whisky' for a 'cup of cold poison,' he would have been met by rounds of applause instead of sighs and no end of blank staring. Who knows but it is to his failure at Dunfermline that Mr. Toole owes his success in life. No man could build up a position in life upon such trash as 'Villikins and Dinah,' nor yet 'A 'Norrible Tale,' and it was perhaps the melancholy end of Dinah in Dunfermline that led Mr. Toole to see the necessity for diverting his talents into other channels. Wise men and women learn from failures, and is it too much to

the treatment he had received at the hands of his friend Irving, an incident of one of his early starring engagements.

assume that the teetotallers of Dunfermline showed Mr. Toole that he could never attain to anything as a big-boot singer of 'Norrible tales;' is it too much to presume that the abstainers of Dunfermline were the means of inducing Mr. Toole to leave 'Villikins' alone and go through the country and act those charming little stories of 'Jim' and the railway officials, which are adorned by morals that sink deep into the hearts of men and women? The story of Mr. Toole's failure in Dunfermline will be found in our issue to-day. Let the man and woman who can profit by failures read it; let the man and woman who cannot build upon ruins, study the little story—

> "Real glory
> Springs from the silent conquest of ourselves;
> And without that the conqueror is naught
> But the first slave."

The *Evening Times*, of Glasgow, on the other hand, takes the incident seriously to heart, declares that the teetotal lecturer referred to was the late Mr. George Easton, "a manly and truthful Scotchman," in regard to whose warning a correspondent signing himself "St. Mungo" says:—"Does Mr. Toole not know that it is hardly possible to lie, in giving instances of the devastating power of drink? and is he not aware of the fact that a broad brush must be used in the early days of all reforms? Even in his own honourable profession the refined wit and delicate pencillings that will please the educated theatre-goer of the city would be entirely lost on a country audience, where strong melodrama or broad burlesque is required. The story of the mother who gave her child a teaspoonful of whisky, and so made it a drunkard, only proves that George Easton was a man before his time; for Mr. Toole is surely not such a Rip Van Winkle as not to know

"I was playing in *Dearer than Life* with Irving and Billington at Leeds; after the play several gentlemen were in the general room of the hotel where we were staying, and among them a certain Mr. Jones, who professed to have a large acquaintance in the profession, and who appeared to have a local reputation as a judge of ages.

"'Well, how old,' said some one, 'would you take Mr. Toole to be?'

"'Well,' said he, 'sixty-five, if he's a day.'

"'Do you know him?' I asked.

"'Oh, yes; know him very well indeed.'

"'Ah! and how old should you take me to be?'

"'Well, I should take you to be forty if you're a day.'

"Irving asked Mr. Jones if he didn't think Mr. Toole was nearer seventy-five than sixty-five. 'No,' he said, 'sixty-five if he's a day;' and the company present seemed to put it down that that would be my age. They had most of them been to the theatre and seen me, for the first time pro-

that members of the medical faculty and distinguished scientists, after years of careful investigation, have come to the conclusion that this dread alcoholism is a hereditary disease, and that many a poor child is born into the world with a latent desire for stimulants, to arouse which it requires but a small supply of strong drink."

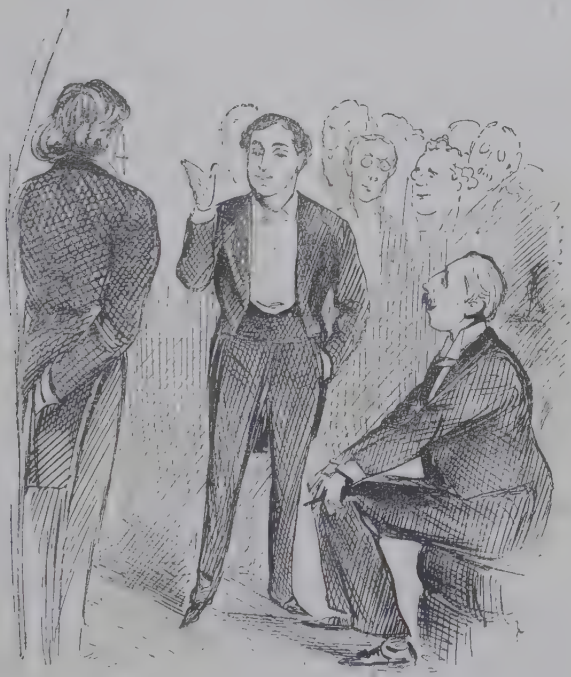
bably, playing an old man, and as it was my first visit to the town, and we were going on by the mail-train that night, I had a fancy not to go away and leave them under the impression that I was this very old gentleman. I found that Jones was a decent sort of fellow, and I said to Irving that before I went I should just give him my card, and let him know what a mistake he had made. By-and-by, when our cab arrived, we said good-night to our casual acquaintances, and taking Mr. Jones aside, I handed him my card, whereupon he said, 'Oh, indeed!' in a very offensive manner, turned upon his heel, and walked away.

"'Well,' I said to my friends, as we drove away, 'that's the most impertinent fellow I think I ever met.' Whereupon Billington and Irving went into fits of laughter, and confessed that they had warned Mr. Jones that I was continually passing myself off as Toole, and that he was to be quite prepared for my handing him a card and continuing the imposition with him."

V.

The host then suggested that he had once heard David James tell a capital story, a bit of Whitechapel romance, which he was sure no one else in the room had heard, about one Garente, a

famous pantomimist, and Harry Carles, a clown. James was pressed to add the story to the evening's collection, and after some excuses that it



MR. DAVID JAMES TELLS THE STORY OF OLD GARENTE.

was too long, and he was sure he had told it before, he gave us the story, which with his permission I now repeat.

"Old Garente," as they called him, was a famous East-end pantomimist, and a friend of Harry Carles, the well-known English clown, who had settled in Italy.

"Garente had taken several English pantomimists as attractions on his Continental tours. Among them was a certain East Ender, who on his return related to his admiring friends many strange and curious adventures. He had the gift of imagination, and his hearers mostly had every desire to assist him in making his points. In a Whitechapel smoke-room, favoured by a select and regular company, he had a chair of his own, and was always willing to narrate his Continental experiences, and his friends were never tired of listening to them. There was one story in particular which they more especially enjoyed. They always drew him promptly for this for the benefit of any new friend, and however often he related it they never called it old, and the prologue of the draw was often in itself amusing enough.

"One of the company would remark: 'You know Italy, mate?'

"'Rarther!' he would answer.

"'Wonderful country?'

"'I should think it was!'

"'You were there with old Garente?'

"'I was, mate;' and so on, until at last some

other drawer would ask, 'Did you ever cross the Alps?'

"'Did I ever what?'

"'Cross the Alps?'

"'Why, it was a-crossing the Arlps as me and Garente had the 'ottest adventure of all as occurred to us.'

"'Tell us about it,' the questioner would say in a spirit of inquiry, as if he had not heard the story a hundred times. Then the pantomimist would remove his pipe from his lips and relate his affair with the bandits.

"'We had had good business,' he would say, 'very good business, and old Garente stuck to the bag—oh, he was the dooce to stick to the bag, old Garente! He always carried his money in a bag, and never parted with it—a closish chap, like all them furriners, never wasted a coin on extra drinks, nor nothing in the way of good fellowship! Well, we was a-going along all right, a-crossing the Arlps, when all of a suddent we thought we hears military music. We stops and listens, and old Garente, he becomes most uncomfortable, a-listening with all his might. We all listens likewise, and we hears far off in the distance the sound of a band, playing a regular bandit's march, the sort of music as you've all heard no doubt at old Drury in *Timour the Tartar*,

a regular bandit's march—*Taratar, taratar taratara thrum, thrum. Thrum! Taratar, taratar, taratar, tarata! Sshsh—sshsh. Thrum!*' (imitating the well-known march from *Timour*, cymbals, drums, and the rest). 'We was not listenin' more than ten minutes when they comes round a bend of the Arlps, a reg'lar army, all a-glittering on prancing 'osses, with flags and banners a-waving, and in front a band of at least fifty performers, with silver trumpets, and cymbals and side-drums, and the entire rig out. It was a grand sight, in them spotless mountains, the 'osses a-prancin', and all of 'em with saddlecloths embroidered with gold and silver, and the army a-comin' on behind the band, with sabres a-flashin' in the sun, and marchin' orderly as if they was Hinglish 'Orse Guards, but, of course, differently dressed—turbans and simytars, and gold lace, and jewels on the bridles of the 'osses; and, well there, such a turn-out as would have been a honour to any country, and to tell you the truth, *Timour the Tartar* weren't in it with 'em, grand as *Timour* were when I see it in its glory. And the band comes blazing on, in all its splendour—*Taratar, taratar taratara, thrum, thrum. Thrum! Taratar, taratar, taratar—taratar taratar! Sshsh, sshsh. Thrum!* Old Garente says, "Hide, boys, hide," says he. He knowed what they was, and what

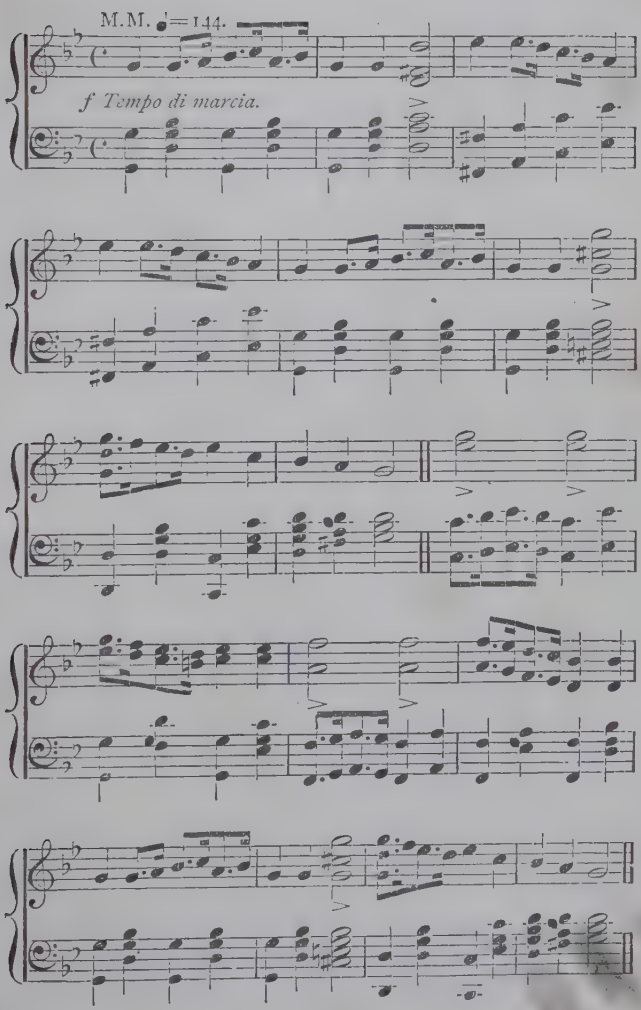
we'd got to expect. Well, we hides like a shot, we vamooches behind a rock; but the heagle eyes of them bandits, they was on us, make no mistake, they'd been on us no doubt all the time; and they dooced soon 'auls us out. "Halt! halt!" says the chief, first in Italian, and then in Hinglish. "Right about," he says. "Forward for the bandit's cave!" And they turns, and off we was marched, the band a-playin' as before, and old Garente a-trying to hide the bag under his cloak, but it weren't no go; besides, what was the good of the bag when our lives weren't worth a hour's purchase? Well, at larst we come to the bandit's cave.'

"Here one of the listeners would ask what sort of a cave it was; the narrator expected questions, and was always prepared for them.

"'Oh, the regler thing,' he would say, 'the regular bandit's cave—blood and bones and all that sort of thing about—Turkey carpets, silver shields, drinking-cups, and gold tables—the regler thing! We was in a pretty funk, I can tell you, when all of a sudden Garente's brother, who'd been a-hyeing the bandit-chief a long time—and I'd begun to notice it—all of a sudden he looks the chief in the eye, turns a flip-flap, and shouts, "Oh! here we are! Why, it's Harry Carles!" And blest if it worn't! It was Harry

Carles, the clown as had guv' up the show business and settled down into a bandit-chief; and here he was with all his army, on the march! Well, I needn't say as they not only spared our lives, but they was awful good to old Garente as an old pal of the chief's; they let him keep his bag; and what is more, a lot of 'em dismounts and they puts us on their 'osses, and marches off—*Taratar, taratar taratar, thrum, thrum. Thrum! Taratar, taratar, taratar—taratar taratar! Sshsh, sshsh. Thrum!* right to the bandit's palace, where they entertained us. Well, I fails for language to tell you how they entertained us. Every kind of luxury, champagne—well, we could have swum in it if we'd wanted—dancing-girls with coins a-hung round their necks, and Turkish trousers above their ankles, and Lord! such eyes they had! And it was more like a dream than anything earthly; and as for the palace in a general way, the palace of *Timour the Tartar* was a fool to it!"[4]

[4] Several correspondents have asked me for the music of the few bars of the march which Mr. James hums when he tells this story. I append it scored for the piano by Mr. Toole's *chef d'orchestre*. Mr. James makes a great point of imitating the trumpets, cymbals, and drums:—


M.M. ♩=144.
f Tempo di marcia.

VI.

Mr. John Hollingshead[5] related some of his experiences as a dramatic author, and Toole gave us an account of Hollingshead "getting me to play his first piece through sheer persistence."

"I think it was our friend Edmund Yates who

[5] Mr. John Hollingshead is best known to the present generation as the first lessee and for many years manager of the Gaiety Theatre; but his training was journalistic, and he has within recent years published several volumes of selections from his contributions to the magazine literature of his time. He was for ten years the dramatic critic of the *Daily News* and during its most popular days was a member of the regular staff of *Household Words*. He wrote afterwards for *All the Year Round*, *Good Words*, and the *Cornhill Magazine*. Mr. Hollingshead was succeeded on the *Daily News* by Mr. Moy Thomas, who tells a characteristic story of the christening of one of Hollingshead's boys at Marylebone church. Toole and Thomas were the godfathers, and on being asked what his profession was, Toole seems to have puzzled the sexton. "Comedian!" he exclaimed, when he was entering the names in the parish register, "never had nobody here of such a profession as that! How do you spell it?" It was, no doubt Mr. Moy Thomas who in a kindly preliminary notice of the announcement of these Reminiscences in the *Daily News* said:—"Years ago it was rumoured that Mr. Toole was preparing a book of 'Anecdotes and Wise Sayings' of his friend and colleague the late Mr. Robert Romer, second comedian in his time at the Adelphi—an actor who, if he had not much wit himself, was at least the cause of wit in other men. That, however, was the fable of a sly joker. There must, nevertheless, be anecdotes of Mr. Romer in Mr. Hatton's book, or it will not convey to future times an adequate notion of Mr. Toole's unrivalled story-telling faculty.'

first introduced me to John, and the introduction was for the purpose of my reading, or having read to me, *The Birthplace of Podgers*. No budding author ever followed up a popular young comedian with such energy and patience as Hollingshead. He had written *The Birthplace of Podgers* for me, and meant me to play it; and in the end I did play it; I should never have had any rest if I hadn't. A wonderfully pushing fellow, friend John, and it only shows that it is sometimes a good thing for both actor and author when the latter is pushed by the former. *The Birthplace of Podgers* turned out to be all the author thought it, a capital piece, very amusing and, what is more, it hit the public."

Lionel Brough[6] told us some of his experiences

[6] "Lionel Brough, comedian, was born at Pontypool, Monmouthshire, March 10th, 1836, being the fourth son of Mr. Barnabas Brough, and a younger brother of the well-known comic authors, 'The Brothers Brough.' He was educated in the Grammar School, Manchester, and under Mr. W. Williams, of the Priory School, London. His first employment was in the humble capacity of office-boy to Mr. J. Timbs, in the *Illustrated London News* office, in Douglas Jerrold's time. Subsequently he published the first number of the *Daily Telegraph*, and for five years he was connected with the *Morning Star*. Going to Liverpool with other members of the Savage Club to give amateur theatrical performances in aid of the Lancashire Relief Fund, he achieved so decided a his-

in the way of early struggles, and the miseries of provincial lodgings; and Irving was just as frank then as he is to-day about the difficulties of cultivating art on thirty shillings a week, especially when an actor had to find his own wardrobe for character parts, and his own hose and such like trifles, when costume pieces were not dressed by the management.

Other stories followed, illustrative of the actor's life in the days of stock companies, and of the probation considered necessary for a claim to act in leading *rôles*. Salaries hardly enough to keep body and soul together were mentioned without malice. The only approach even to hostile criticism in this direction, was the remark of one gentleman, who said, "and on thirty shillings a week they expected me not to get into debt, and made it a grievance when they heard I had a tailor's bill!" Each experience of provincial probation was an unconscious tribute to the narrator's sincere prosecution of his art; it was a story of

trionic success that he was offered a regular engagement by Mr. A. Henderson, and accordingly made his first professional appearance at the Prince of Wales's Theatre at Liverpool in 1864. Since that date he has played the principal low-comedy characters in London and all through the provinces. He represented 'Tony Lumpkin,' in *She Stoops to Conquer*, for upwards of 200 nights. Mr. Brough was manager of Covent Garden Theatre for Mr. Dion Boucicault during the season in which *Babil and Bijou* was produced."—"Men of the Time."

hardships courageously endured for the love of it, of disappointment patiently borne with the forlorn hope of ultimate success.

There are very serious, sober-minded people who are inclined to think that social gatherings of the profession are orgies. Of course there can be no greater mistake. Actors are easily entertained and they easily entertain each other. Comparing notes upon plays and the treatment of certain characters, exchanging experiences and so on, are to them engrossing topics; and on the night in question I remember that though the company had heard Irving on more than one occasion recite Calverly's humorous narratory poem of "Geminii et Virgo," they insisted upon his repeating it, which he did, sitting by the fire, a cigar in his hand and a contented smile on his face; and the two Grossmiths, George and Weedon, gave us a reminiscence of Arab life as they had seen it in the neighbourhood of Camden Town; Weedon afterwards essaying an imitation of Mr. Hare in *Caste*, which was a model of artistic mimicry, being a reproduction or impersonation of Mr. Hare at his best. It was a pleasant day and a merry night. Alas! that one should have to speak of it as the promise of a happy year blighted at its close with a most bitter grief.

VII.

"REFER to my dear boy's death," the bereaved father writes me, "in a few lines, say that in the saddest affliction of my life I was supported by a good wife and an affectionate daughter."

Frank Lawrence Toolè had inherited all the generous instincts of his father, was singularly amiable, had passed his examinations for the bar, and would have been "called" in due course. A football accident at Eton, however, long forgotten, had engendered aneurism of the femoral artery, which developed seriously towards the end of the year 1879, and terminated fatally on the 4th of December. The bereaved parents received touching letters and telegrams of condolence from all parts of the world. The Prince of Wales having been a constant inquirer after the boy's condition during the later days of his illness, wrote his father in sympathetic terms at the close, showing a most delicate friendly feeling for the actor in whom he had so long taken a kindly personal interest. Frank Lawrence Toole, who died at the age of 23, lives in the hearts of many friends who knew and admired him for those fine qualities which are none the less masculine when they are accompanied, as in his case, with an unaffected

simplicity of taste and manner, and a fervent love of home. He was a young man of varied accomplishments, musical and otherwise; but above all this he was a lovable youth, an affectionate son, and had all the qualities which go to make a good and useful citizen. I find it difficult to leave the subject, mournful as it is, without a more ample and worthy tribute to his memory; but the shadow which fell so heavily upon the life of my collaborator in these Reminiscences will have been made sufficiently apparent to the general reader; and the notes with which I am dealing belong to a public career, and may not be expunged under the influences of a private sorrow.

## IV.

## AFTER AN INTERVAL OF NEARLY TEN YEARS.

A sorrowful vacation—The Reminiscences resumed—Notes from Aix-les-Bains—At home in William Street—Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, and the "Dodger"—A postprandial reminiscence of Edinburgh—Stanley, the Scotch actor, poet, and preacher—Rags and plush—"Twig"—Ideas for public entertainments—Toole at home—Irving in the fire-light—Books and albums—A Marlborough House *menu*—The comic appeal of a famous light comedian—"Buzfuz" and Mr. Serjeant Ballantyne—Beginning this present work in downright earnest.

### I.

UNDER the shadow of his great sorrow, Mr. Toole for several months disappeared from public life. Seriously ill when his son died, he sought health and change of scene abroad. His medical adviser eventually insisted upon a return to work as the only remedy for both mind and body. He removed from Orme Square to Albert Gate, and went back to work at his pretty theatre in King William Street, where he met with a cordial welcome at the hands of his old friends, the public.

During "these changing scenes of life" I had made several trips across the Atlantic. The idea of the Reminiscences was laid aside, as it seemed to me, for good. It is the unexpected that happens. Nothing could have been further from my thoughts than a collaboration with Mr. Henry Irving in the narration of that illustrious actor's first experiences of America; yet, long before the Reminiscences of Toole were again spoken of, I had travelled with Irving through the United States, and written his "Impressions of America." Three years ago, one quiet night at the Garrick, the subject of these Toole papers cropped up afresh, and in August, 1886, I visited the comedian at home and began this present chapter. Toole had suffered a serious attack of gout during the year, and had been sent to Aix-les-Bains. As one of his friendly callers I had seen him during his illness. His patience under physical agony is not remarkable when one considers the solid generosity of his character, his sensitiveness about giving others pain or trouble, his equable temper, his habit of taking life as it comes. He wrote several letters to me from Aix-les-Bains. They were decorated with the suggested figure of a bather who was being conveyed in a sack from the bath to his hotel. The sack was upright on a hand-barrow, in charge of two bearers. "This is how

they carry me," he writes, "like Guy Fawkes; I was a little better yesterday and felt I must do something, so I put my head out at the top and made a face at one of the carriers and a small audience, but they none of them laughed; I suppose they pitied me, I must have looked like a lunatic; I felt like one, and therefore subsided once more into Guy Fawkes." Later, I had letters from Geneva. "It is very beautiful—the lake," he wrote, "but as I sit looking at it, and the sun is setting in the west, as the poets say, I would give something to see the Strand and have a chat at the club in my own language." He returned from Aix a new man, and his delight at getting back again among his friends was something very pleasant to contemplate.

"It could be said of Toole, if anything happened to take him from us, as was said of Garrick, that his death eclipsed the gaiety of nations," was a journalistic comment of the day when it was reported that his illness was serious; and the affectionate welcome he met with at his favourite club, the Garrick, touched him deeply, as did the warmth of the receptions that greeted him on the professional tour which followed.

II.

William Street, Albert Gate, is close upon the

direct line of Western traffic, and Number Seventeen commands a full view of it. In the season, the splendid highway from Piccadilly is thronged with life. Even in this unfashionable month of August, with the fallen leaves beginning to chase each other in the wind, Albert Gate is busy, and a constant procession of wheels passes along the road towards Hammersmith.

The hall of Number Seventeen opens upon a fine staircase, and into a suite of rooms which belong to this narrative of gossip, chat, excursions and reminiscences. They are the rooms in which Mr. Toole receives his friends.

Before we enter, with our host, let us glance at the souvenirs which decorate the hall. A bust of Shakspere, and one of Macready ("given to me by Lowne, who was a friend of the great tragedian," says Toole), a few engravings, and a large model of the Maypole Inn, immortalized by the story of "Barnaby Rudge," are the most noticeable things. The Maypole is a clever realization of the picturesque inn, with models of the leading characters of the novel grouped in front of it, the whole under a glass case.

"It was a feature of the dining-room of the Hen and Chickens, at Birmingham," says my host. "Dickens saw it there and greatly admired it. I tried to buy it, but the proprietor would not sell it

at any price. He came to a kind of agreement with me, however, that if ever he parted with it I should have it. When he retired from the Hen and Chickens he sent it to me. Unfortunately, Dickens was dead when the model came, and my chief purpose in desiring to buy it was frustrated; I wanted to give it to the author of 'Barnaby Rudge.' I am not a great reader—never have much time to read books except those belonging to the parts I play; but I have experienced intense enjoyment over the wonderful stories of Dickens. What always delights me with his work are his perfect studies of character; to me this side of his art is the most fascinating. To have known from his own lips that he approved of my efforts to realize some of his creations on the stage, has always given me the greatest gratification."

III.

While we are talking we have passed into the anteroom of the library, where a pleasant fire is burning, and the host's arm-chair, with a reading-lamp placed conveniently above it, is drawn cosily within the warmth of the hearthstone. We stroll through the room, into the library, and thence into the dining-room, and back again. The walls are full of pictures, the dining-room devoted to

paintings, the other rooms to engravings, water-colours, and photographs, all more or less interesting, not only as works of art, but from their pleasant associations. There are landscapes by Sam Bough, the well-known Scotch artist; portraits of James Wallack, Robson, Wright, Webster, Widdicombe, Buckstone, Liston, Harley, Compton, Thackeray; busts of Irving, Shakspere, Dickens, and the Prince of Wales; engravings from familiar works by Landseer, Gerome, Frith, and Turner; character portraits of Edmund Kean, Bannister, Miss O'Neill as "Juliet," a *Vanity Fair* caricature of the host as "Guffin," and a pretty, fanciful incident in the life of "the Bard of Avon."

"The dainty bit of landscape you are looking at," remarks my host, as we pause opposite a water-colour that recalls Corot, "is by Jefferson ('Rip Van Winkle'), who painted it for me; it is a sketch on the Thames; if he had followed the art of painting instead of acting, they say he would have made just as great a mark as he has done on the stage. I am very proud of that *souvenir* of 'Rip;' it always suggests to me the dreaminess of Sleepy Hollow. The pictures close by are two water-colours by F. W. Topham, presented to me, and the next one is by Edward Duncan, old friends now dead. Here is a drawing

by Wainwright which belonged to Charles Mathews; Wainwright was a murderer, not the Whitechapel criminal, his namesake, and not even blood relations unless murderers can be called blood relations. The Mathews *souvenir* was the work of this fiend in human shape who insured people's lives and then poisoned them. He was a critic, I believe. My experience of critics has been of the pleasantest, and the worst I have ever before heard of a critic is that he has poisoned the public mind against an actor—generally a crushed tragedian—or stabbed an artistic reputation. I never heard of any other crime laid at the door of a critic except in the case of Wainwright. Perhaps that is why Mathews treasured this picture."

"But Wainwright was also an author, I believe, and a friend of Bulwer and Charles Lamb. We must look him up."[1]

[1] The *Daily Telegraph* in an editorial article on the career of Cooper, the forger, vignettes in a few graphic sentences the character and career of Wainwright; we need go no further for an explanation of the interest which Mathews took in the drawing by Wainwright which Mr. Toole bought among other *souvenirs* at the sale of the famous comedian's effects. Students of criminal history may, perhaps, maintain that if William Ringold Cooper be acknowledged as King of the Forgers, the title of Emperor of that ilk should be accorded to the infamous Wainwright, surgeon, essayist, artist, and critic, the "Janus Weathercock" of the *London Magazine*; the *confrère* of North-

"This is a statuette of Bouffe, the famous French actor, presented by the actor himself to Mathews. The little figure of Esmeralda belonged to Dickens, and the wine-coolers on the sideboard were among the interesting relics I bought at the Gad's Hill sale."

I feel that the owner's brief descriptions of these treasures are sufficient without any further indication of them, the more so that they suggest incidents and recollections of the past which give them at the moment their greatest value to both recorder and reader.

"Here is a picture of myself as the 'Dodger' —painted by whom do you think? Keeley Haleswelle. He did it in 1854, and in the next room there is a specimen of his landscape art of

cote, Campbell, and Charles Lamb; the friend of Talfourd, Bulwer, and Dickens. Wainwright, indeed, might claim imperial rank in the domain of infamy, for he was a murderer and a seducer as well as a forger. During a long series of years this astonishing villain continued to betray innocent young girls, to insure their lives for large sums, and then to poison them; but, so crafty were his tactics, so keen his caution, that the crime of murder could never be brought home to him; and at last the insurance offices, yearning to be rid for good and all of this monstrous caitiff, offered to forego the capital charges if he would plead guilty to a transportable felony. This he did, and, being sent to New South Wales, was liberated after a time on ticket-of-leave. For awhile he earned a struggling livelihood as a miniature painter at Sydney, but he died at last in abject misery and abandonment.

last year—an admirable painter! I sat to Haleswelle for the 'Dodger' of *Oliver Twist*, in the trousers I still use in the part; they are a first-rate property, really old from age, no patches, no artificial rags, the dilapidations the real work of time; they were given to me by Robert Wyndham, of the Edinburgh Theatre, when first I played the 'Dodger' there. They had belonged to Murray,[2] who had the theatre before Wyndham, a clever fellow, but though he was manager, he played minor characters; he wore those trousers for a small part which he played in a version of the *Heart of Midlothian;* Scott saw him and was very complimentary about his performance; Mackay was the great Scotch actor of the time; he was in the piece, but Scott seemed to be especially pleased with the realization of the little part played by Murray.[3] The trousers were old

[2] Mr. W. Murray was famous both as actor and manager. Mr. C. J. Dibdin, whose "Annals of the Edinburgh Stage" is a notable contribution to the history of the drama, mentions his first appearance, on November 20th, 1809, as "The Count" in *Lovers' Vows*, among the landmarks of Scotch theatrical history. "Murray's connection with the Edinburgh stage was probably of more importance to it than that of any other man who ever lived."

[3] Writing to his friend Terry, on the 18th of April, Scott says:—"Murray has netted upwards of 3000*l.* on *Rob Roy*: to be sure the man who played the 'Bailie' made a piece of acting equal to whatever has been seen in the profession. For

when Murray wore them in that very part; Charles Dickens saw me play the 'Dodger' in them, and I told him their pedigree, and how Sir

MR. TOOLE AS "THE ARTFUL DODGER."

Walter had seen them. Dickens was very much interested; it seemed to make him thoughtful,

my part, I was actually electrified by the truth, spirit, and humour which he threw into the part. It was the living 'Nicol Jarvie;' conceited, pragmatical, cautious, generous, proud of his connection with 'Rob Roy,' frightened for him at the same

and he mentioned the name of Scott with something like reverence."

"The age of that fine property in the way of trousers is considerably over half a century!" I suggested.

"They are eighty years old if they are a day, as my friend Jones, of Leeds, would say," he replied. "At Edinburgh four or five years ago, when I had occasion to make a speech, I told them what was a fact, that I met in Princes Street an old Scotch friend who said he hoped I was putting my money away for a rainy day, and

time, and yet extremely desirous to interfere with him as an adviser. The tone in which he seemed to give him up as a lost man after having provoked him into some burst of Highland violence—'Ah! Rab, Rab!'—was quite inimitable. I do assure you I never saw a thing better played." The following is also from Scott's pen. It is an extract from a letter to Miss Joanna Baillie, and although written two years later than the former extract, is best inserted here:—"Mackay is going up to London to play 'Bailie Nicol Jarvie' for a single night at Covent Garden, and I beg you of all dear loves to go and see him; for taking him in that single character, I am not sure I ever saw anything in my life possessing so much truth and comic effect at the same time. . . . In short, I never saw a part better sustained. I pray you to collect a party of Scotch friends to see it. I doubt whether the exhibition will prove as satisfactory to those who do not know the original from whom the resemblance is taken. I observe the English demand, as is natural, broad caricature in the depicting of national peculiarities."—"Dibdin's Annals of the Edinburgh Stage."

recommended me to take example by the thrift of the Scotch people, who, while they lived well and treated their friends, were a careful race. I said I did not think there was a Scotchman who was more careful than I myself, and I was sure he was not so careful in the matter of trousers. How did I mean? he asked; I said I was still wearing a pair of trousers that were given to me five and thirty years ago!"

IV.

THE reader will forgive the chronicler if he pauses here to remark, in a rather long stage "aside," that the occasion of the speech in question was a complimentary supper given to Mr. Toole by the Pen and Pencil Club, Edinburgh, under the presidency of Dr. Andrew Wilson, with Messrs. J. Miller-Craig and W. G. Stevenson as croupiers. In response to the toast of his health, proposed in genial terms by the Chairman, Mr. Toole, as reported in *The Scotsman*, replied as follows (the reference to the trousers being cut out in no doubt a judicious and necessary condensation of the comedian's rambling remarks) :—

"He was deeply touched with the great compliment which they had paid him by being there that night. He thanked the Chairman very heartily

and sincerely for the genial way in which the toast had been proposed, and for the way in which the audience had received it. Recently he had been the guest of two of the most brilliant orators—Lord Rosebery and the Prime Minister. He was no politician, but he had partaken of their hospitality, and he only wished he had a little of their power of oratory. But if they would allow him just to ramble on in his own way he would feel a little more at his ease. (Cheers.) He stated that his first engagement in Edinburgh was at the Theatre Royal in Princes Street, where the General Post Office now was, with Robert Wyndham, the father of his dear friend Wyndham who was sitting there, who made his first appearance in Edinburgh before him, for young Wyndham was two months old when he (Toole) arrived. (Laughter.) It was a great pleasure to see him so much esteemed, and to see him occupy the proud place of co-partner with his friend Mr. Howard in one of the most charming theatres. He spoke of having played with one of the sweetest and gentlest of ladies in Edinburgh—Miss Nicol. He had the good fortune of becoming acquainted with Mr. Russel, and of very often meeting him. He also became acquainted with the late President of the Pen and Pencil Club, Sir Daniel Macnee, and Mr. David Roberts, the great artist, who proposed

him for the Garrick Club in London. He had many delightful recollections. He remembered getting married (laughter), and he thought the best thing he could do was to spend his honeymoon in Edinburgh. He had often played the Mock Duke in *The Honeymoon* since (laughter), but on that occasion he was the real Duke (renewed laughter), in comfortable lodgings in Greenside Street. He remembered very well his first little savings. He had had a benefit in the old Theatre Royal, and he was told to put his twenty or thirty pounds away in the British Linen Company. His wife was rather doubtful; she thought it was a laundry. (Laughter and cheers.) But when he was taken to St. Andrew Square and saw the building he had more confidence. (Loud laughter.) He deposited his twenty or thirty pounds there, and he used often to find himself strolling into St. Andrew Square to see that the building was there. (Renewed laughter.) He sometimes looked at it now, and he would not mind having some shares in it. He remembered insuring his life in Edinburgh in the North British, in Princes Street, and he made it a point to pay his premium regularly —that they made him do. (Loud laughter.) They took a very kindly interest in him. And when he dropped in there they looked as if they

wanted to feel his pulse. Mr. Toole then gave some anecdotes of his acquaintance with Irving, Sims Reeves, and other actors, and in closing, referring to the chairman's remarks about his being a Scotchman, he said he sometimes tried Scotch stories among his friends in London, but he always left off telling them when he passed Carlisle. He, however, remembered the lines—

'Fareweel Littlejohn, Dowen, and Blair,
I'll never sup kail wi' ye ony mair.'

(Laughter.) He concluded by again heartily and sincerely thanking them for the honour they had done him. He would regard this as a red-letter day, or rather night, in his existence."

V.

"Oh, by the way," continued Toole, "here is a picture by Montagu Stanley, a celebrated Edinburgh actor. He was an admirable Crichton, poet, painter, preacher. He is buried on the Clyde. He was with Murray—was, in fact, his great star. In those days the popularity of a stock actor was a matter of great importance to a manager, especially when the local star was content to remain in the provinces, and had no hankering after London. Stanley was of great value to

Murray; but he made up his mind to leave the stage and go into the Church. Long before he told Murray of this determination he had given his confidence to some Church friends. He did not like telling Murray, because he knew it would trouble him. More than once he delayed entering upon his new duties, because he shrunk from giving his friend pain; but Murray had become acquainted with his decision. The secret had not been kept, and Murray was much annoyed that Stanley had taken his confidence elsewhere; so when at last Stanley felt the time had really come when he could keep the announcement back no longer, he found Murray prepared with not a very kind reply. 'Going to leave the stage, are ye?' said Murray. 'Well, it is about time, I'm thinking; ye've done all ye can in the drama!' The cut was keenly felt by Stanley, but after a time the manager told him how he had been tempted to say the unkind thing, and how he did not mean it, and so the old friendship was renewed. Stanley became famous as a preacher." [4]

[4] "An engagement with Charles Kean opened on April 9th, 1838, and concluded with the season on the 28th of the same month, when Montagu Stanley made his last appearance on any stage, playing 'Laertes' to Kean's 'Hamlet.' Believing that the life of an actor was not consistent with a religious life, he sacrificed his profession to his conscience. After leaving the stage he gave lessons in drawing, elocution, fencing (at

VI.

By this time we have returned to the cosy little front room, with its "old arm-chair," its heavy *portière*, its glowing fire, and the hum of outside life and bustle, "the everlasting music of London."

"The painting you were noticing in the dining-room, 'A Wet Day at Greenock,' is by Atkinson Grimshawe, of Leeds," continues my host, "and here is a sketch of Miss Woolgar and myself in

which he was very expert), and in playing the flute, besides following his favourite pursuit of painting, to which he latterly devoted himself entirely. He died of consumption in the Isle of Bute, May 4th, 1844. He seems to have been of a very gentle and lovable nature, liked by all who knew him, and though, for obvious reasons, he mixed very little latterly with his fellow-actors, they all respected him as a good, conscientious man. Stanley seems to have been a sound, judicious actor, who never offended, and, as might be expected from a man of reading and cultivation, his renderings were sensible and scholarly. At the same time he had his failings, among which could be reckoned coldness and stiffness in action. He was also inclined, occasionally, to substitute noise for real passion. There is no doubt, too, that with his growing disapproval of the stage his acting did not improve, for it is scarcely to be supposed that he could throw himself *con amore* into what he did at best from necessity, and not from liking. One of his best parts was 'Robert Macaire,' in which the mixture of broad farce and melodrama seemed to suit him exactly." — "The Annals of the Edinburgh Stage," by James C. Dibdin. 1888.

*The Willow Copse;* beneath it is a photograph of Brough and myself as the two old men in *Dearer than Life*. The work of developing the negative was a longer business than it is now; so

"TELL THE GOVERNOR HIS TWO BROTHERS FROM THE WORKHOUSE CALLED."

while the artist was at work, Brough and I, in our rags—it was a warm day in June—walked out into Grosvenor Square and called at the house of a certain would-be swell, who prided himself on his money, and was a great snob, so everybody said.

The door was opened by a gorgeous footman. 'Master in?' we asked. 'No, he is not, said the flunkey, with a disdainful stare at our rags, and thoughts, no doubt, of the policeman round the corner. 'Not in! Tell him his two brothers from the Workhouse called to see him.' That flunkey, I expect, would look down on his master ever afterwards.

"Here is a portrait of Macklin, who played 'Shylock,' as you know, when he was a hundred years old; here is a picture of Widdicombe and Mrs. Glover; and this is an interesting work, an unfinished portrait of Stephen Kemble as 'Falstaff,' by Clint. Sir John Millais admired it immensely the other day; said it was very clever. On your right is a photograph of Paul Bedford, myself, and Billington, done by the instantaneous process, the first time they did photographs quickly. Paul had posed himself by the mantelshelf and did not hear the artist say it was all over; so we let him remain standing until he was tired. At last he said, 'Oh, bother this, dear boys, I'm cramped; when is the focussing going to finish?' 'It has been finished and the picture taken long ago,' we said. Here is a character portrait of Charles Mathews in the first part he played in London, and the quaint-looking little boy, dressed like a clergyman, is De Wilde's original drawing of

Mathews, reproduced in the 'Life of Mathews,' by Charles Dickens, Jun., and about which Charles Mathews says—but here's the book and here's the chapter :—

"'My father's nickname in his early days had been, in allusion to his very thin figure, "Stick," rather an ominous appellation for an actor—I was therefore, as a natural consequence, dubbed "Twig," and as the cottage had been taken mainly for my health, it was honoured by the distinguished title of "Twig Hall." It was a mere nutshell, nothing more—a real "cottage" not a "cottage of gentility," pronounced, upon the authority of the poet, to have been so dear to the devil, whose favourite vice was "pride that apes humility"—but a little rural snuggery, and it became the resort of many witty and accomplished people, who there threw off their town manners, and gave way to the merriness of their hearts. Of course I was too young to enjoy their wit, but I appreciated their gaiety ; and who knows how much this early association with pleasant people may have helped to give a cheerful tone to the rest of my existence ? It has been said that "just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined," and I certainly must have got a twist or two, here at starting, likely to influence the direction of my subsequent growth. With Geo. Colman, Theo-

dore Hook, James and Horace Smith—the authors of the "Rejected Addresses"—Dubois, Liston, Charles Young, Charles Kemble, the beautiful and accomplished Harriet Mellon, afterwards Duchess of St. Albans, and many other such celebrities of the day for playmates, it would have been a marvel if I had not been a little tinged with the colour of their minds, and led by their example to take a joyous view of life. Besides the familiar sobriquet of "Twig," I was almost as generally spoken of as the "little parson," and as an appropriate birthday offering, one of our waggish friends presented to me a complete little parson's suit of black—old-fashioned square-cut coat, long-flapped waistcoat, knee-breeches, worsted stockings, shoes and buckles, white bands, &c.—attired in which I was lifted on the dining-table to drink the healths of the "Tompany." The drawing of me in my clerical costume by De Wilde bears the date of June, 1807, which would make my age at that time just three years and a half, which I fancy may be safely taken as my earliest appearance in character.'"

## VII.

When I have marked the above passage for future reference, Toole thoroughly wound up for

talk, as you will have observed, says he feels like a showman taking me round his menagerie. "Only want a pointer and a little of this style" (imitating the old Richardson manner): "Here

"TOOLE AT HOME."—AN IDEA.

you observe the two-headed hyena of the woods, a natural phenomenon such as the world has never seen, except in this world-famed collection, which has been exhibited before all the crowned heads of Europe!" "Just now I felt like 'Charles' in *The School for Scandal*, and was nearly inviting you to give me a bidding; but you looked so serious that I hadn't the heart."

"For my part," I replied, "I felt rather like a man in possession, making an inventory—hope the reader will take a higher view of the result."

"You have certainly taken possession of me," said my host. "I never before felt so competent to go on talking about myself; you are such a first-rate audience, that's the reason, I suppose. But while I think of it, that notion of the showman reminds me of a fancy I have often had of giving an entertainment something after the style of Mathews—*Toole at Home*. I thought of a pretty drawing-room stage, nicely furnished, taking a hint from Albert Smith's platform at the Egyptian Hall; I used to enjoy going to Smith's afternoons. I would have made the theatre a continuation of the stage, as it were, so as to give the idea of afternoon tea, and then I would have come on and told the audience stories, or given them sketches of character, or humorous bits of experience; I would have had no costume—a sort of pleasant, chatty, sketchy, *Trying a Magistracy* affair. I thought of it all again the other day at Aix, and when I was there I did it in my own mind, arranged my stage in King William Street, had a pretty back-cloth of the Savoy mountains, a nice *al fresco* kind of *salon* furnished down to the footlights, a few flowers, a palm or two, and all in taking style; and I gave

my visitors sketches of the odd people I had met at Aix, the bathers, the loungers, the roulette players, the tourists, and the whole thing; and it was a great success. I applauded myself, and enjoyed it very much. What do you think? Could I make a real audience enjoy it?"

"I am sure you could," I said. "I think you might go round the world with such an entertainment—a little music, say, thrown in?"

"Oh, I would have some music! Do you remember the story of the fellow whom Thackeray had chaffed getting even with him over his lecture on the Georges? 'I went to your lecture, Thackeray,' he said. 'Indeed. I hope you liked it?'. 'Oh, yes. With a piano I think you will be able to make the thing a success.' I don't think I tell the story correctly, but Thackeray was a very sensitive man. I can imagine the piano being anything but a harmonious suggestion. I met him once or twice, and heard him sing his 'Little Billee.'"

"Referring to your idea of *Toole at Home*," I said, "do you know that before he came to London and made his first success here, Irving had thought of arranging a dramatic entertainment in which he would be the sole performer?"

"No, I don't remember that he ever mentioned it to me," replied my host.

"The idea was a good one, and it is interesting to recall it. He had even gone so far as thinking out the title, which was to be *Readings in the Firelight*, or *Stories told in the Inglenook*, or something in that direction. His plan was to have the stage or platform furnished as an old interior, a library say, with an inglenook, a fire burning on the hearth, the lighting cleverly arranged to suit his work; he would have told his audiences weird dramatic stories, possibly with music off the stage, and other effects; but he would not have confined the entertainment entirely to tragedy, he would have had daylight as well as firelight in the old room; his design was to have an original framework written to suit the various pieces, recitations, and stories."

"And a capital notion, too!" exclaimed my host, "if he had done it he would have made a hit with it; I am glad he didn't, or he might never have had a theatre, which would have been a bad thing for the Stage; he would have had a hall, though; it was never anything more than a matter of time and patience with Irving; he was always looking forward, if not with entire confidence, always with hope and courage. We gave an entertainment together in Glasgow, Irving and I, years ago, in aid of the sufferers from a Great Bank failure—two hours of Tragedy

and Comedy. It was repeated on two mornings ; one day Irving began with his recitations. I followed with mine ; the next day comedy was first and tragedy followed. Irving was acting at

MR. TOOLE AS "SERGEANT BUZFUZ."

night in Edinburgh, I was playing in Glasgow. Irving recited 'Belshazzar's Feast,' 'The Uncle,' 'Eugene Aram;' I 'tried a magistrate,' did the 'Buzfuz Speech,' delivered some comic lectures—one of my own and two that Blanchard wrote for me. The affair was a great success, and we

handed over nearly 800*l.* to the fund. By the way, when I first played 'Buzfuz' in the trial scene at the Gaiety, I was very anxious to have a correct wig and gown, and asked Serjeant Ballantyne's advice about the matter. He replied by sending me his own serjeant's dress, the wig with a little patch in the centre, the little silk coat, bib, and gown complete. I was to use them until such time as I could have them properly copied by my costumier. They came to me in a tin box, looking very serious and legal. On the first night that I wore them Serjeant Parry sat at one end of the stalls and Serjeant Ballantyne at the other. The next day I received a very kind and complimentary note from Serjeant Ballantyne, asking me to accept the robes and wig—a gift I hope I duly appreciated. It was as thoughtful as it was gracious. I can't tell you how proud I felt. And here is Grimaldi's snuff-box. It was given to me by Grimaldi's successor, Tom Matthews, who has long lived in retirement at Brighton. He had bequeathed the relic to me in his will; but one day when I called on him he gave it to me. You said you wanted to see my two albums of autographs and sketches; come into the Library."

VIII.

My host has told us that he has not time to read

much beyond the literature connected with his work. I find on his well-arranged bookshelves the works of Shakspere, Dickens, Thackeray, Lever, Scott, Bret Harte, Washington Irving, Macaulay, some presentation copies of recent novels, the lives of many actors, copies of a few choice books of plays and travels, and a miscellaneous collection of standard and current works such as men buy and collect for reading and not for show.

The Albums are five handsome volumes, full of autographs ancient and modern, accompanied here and there with sketches, caricatures, engravings, many of them valuable, all of them interesting; but for the purposes of these papers it is only desirable to mention what may be called its epistolary treasures. One of the first letters in the collection is as follows:—

"Marlborough House, Pall Mall,

"31*st January*, 1882.

"DEAR MR. TOOLE,—The Prince of Wales desires me to beg your acceptance of the accompanying pin as a *souvenir* of your visit to Sandringham the other day.[5] His Royal Highness

[5] "THEATRICALS AT SANDRINGHAM.—The secret that his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales had specially requested another important dramatic performance for the amusement of

directs me to take this opportunity of repeating what he has already said as to the great pleasure which your performance gave both to the Princess of Wales and himself, and how much it was appreciated by them, as well as by everybody present.

"Believe me,

"Yours truly,

"FRANCIS KNOLLYS."

After this comes the following, from the same address:—

his own personal and private guests has been admirably kept. This time the scene was moved from Abergeldie to Sandringham, and that popular comedian, Mr. J. L. Toole, was asked to arrange a pleasant evening's entertainment with the aid of his company from the Folly, hereafter to be called Toole's, Theatre. Last night, everything having been satisfactorily and diplomatically organized by Mr. J. L. Toole and his clever manager, Mr. George Loveday, the company came over from Bury St. Edmunds, where they had been acting, and appeared on a bijou stage which had been erected at Sandringham House as a surprise to the Princess and her assembled guests. The pieces selected were *Our Clerks*, *The Steeplechase*, and *Ici on parle Français*, all favourites with the Prince some twenty odd years ago at the Adelphi, and a most enjoyable evening was spent, thanks to the vivacity and humour of this excellent comedian, who had here a fine field for the display of his ability. It was said by all present that Mr. Toole had never acted so well before, and certainly he has seldom had such an appreciative and enthusiastic audience. It is not improbable that this will not be the only performance by 'special request' at Sandringham."—*Daily Telegraph*, January, 1882.

"The Equerry-in-Waiting is desired by the Prince of Wales to invite Mr. J. L. Toole to dinner at 8.30 on Sunday, February 19th.

"An answer is requested."

Over the leaf is the Royal *menu*,[6] which those readers who are not accustomed to dine with Royalty will no doubt like to examine. It runs as follows:—

Marlborough House,
Dîner du 19 Février, 1882.

Huîtres.

POTAGES.
Consommé à la Printanier.
Bisque de Homard.

POISSONS.
Cabillaud, sauce aux Huîtres.
Filets de saumon en Matelote.

[6] Some correspondence appeared in the press on the publication of this souvenir of a royal dinner, the outcome of which was an expression of opinion that the Marlborough House *menu* might be taken as a practical rebuke to those ostentatious dinner-givers with whom the elaborate length of their *menu* is the chief consideration. If this little extract from Mr. Toole's album should tend to lessen the number of dishes at both private and ceremonial dinners it will surely serve a good purpose. The fashion of many dishes and very varied bills of fare is a pernicious one; and does not interpret the art of *la gourmandise* as the French and English masters, Brilliatt Savarin and Mr. Original Walker, understood and practised it.

ENTRÉES.
Côtelettes d'Agneau.
Mauviettes à l'Allemande.
RELEVÉS.
Poulardes à l'Estragon.
Bœuf rôti.
RÔTI.
Faisans.
Gélinottes de Russie.
——
Asperges.
——
ENTREMETS.
Plum Pudding.
Pain de Mandarin à la Chantilly.
——
Glace à la Napolitaine.

Then come letters from Horace Seymour, inviting Mr. Toole to breakfast with the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone at Downing Street; Savage Club festival menus, social and friendly letters from the Duke of Beaufort, Lord Rosebery, Lady Burdett-Coutts, the Duchess of Bedford, Frank Holl, Keeley Haleswell, Du Maurier, Whistler, Long, Tenniel, Quain, Ballantyne, Julius Benedict, Sims Reeves, Byron, Gilbert, Buchanan, Yates, Irving, Burnand, Talfourd, Charles Reade, Charles Dickens, Bancroft, Frith, Millais, Leighton, and many other equally familiar names,[7] which are in

[7] One of the letters which Mr. Toole most prizes and the prayer of which, with Mr. Hollingshead's assistance,

the owner's estimation of far more value than "the letters of men ever so illustrious that are not

he was delighted to grant, is the following characteristic epistle:—

"Belle Vue Mansions, Brighton,
"*August 6th*, 1873.

"My dear Toole,—Were you ever in a mess? If you never were I can explain it to you, having been in several; indeed I don't mind confessing to you that I am in one now, and, strange to say, you are perhaps the only man who can get me out of it. You need not button up your pockets, it isn't a pecuniary one. Only fancy! after thirty years' practice and experience I have made a mistake in my dates, and for the first time in my life find myself engaged to two managers at the same time. Now they say a man cannot serve two masters, but I can if they will come one after the other, only one at a time, one down, t'other come on; but to play at Bristol and the Gaiety on the same night (and keep it up for a week), I don't see my way to accomplish. In a moment of enthusiasm I engaged to begin with Chute on September 29th, and I had scarcely done so when Hollingshead reminded me that I was booked to begin with him on that date, and that it could not be altered. Conceive my dismay. Chute holds fast—'can't be altered,'—so does Hollingshead—'can't be altered.' Now, Toole—*dear* Toole, beloved Toole—can't you stay a week longer at the Gaiety? Can't you let me begin there on Monday, October 6th (as I thought I did) and get me out of my dilemma? Can't you make this sacrifice to friendship and put three or four hundred more into your pocket? Virtue is not its own reward, but an extra week of fine business is. Now Toole—adored Tooley—the best of men—first of comedians—most amiable of your sex—burst into tears—throw your arms and sob out, 'Do with me as thou wilt—play me another week—pay me another three hundred and be happy.' Breathless with anxiety, yet swelling with

written to me;" as he says, "one likes to keep these tokens of men one has known, and there is something very tender, I think, in the look of a letter from an old friend who has passed away; I am not at all morbid, quite the reverse, but I sometimes find myself in the mood to spend an hour among such of my letters and pictures as have become relics of those who are gone and whom one knew intimately; one can never get up a very deep feeling of regret about people one has not known, however much one may admire them; but let us go back to the snuggery."

"And begin your reminiscences in downright earnest," I said, "from the day that our friend Blanchard first met you in the country, a little boy down from London for a holiday."

"Very well; you *are* a fellow to drive ahead!"

"Imagine you are giving that At Home," I suggested, "and the first story is an account of your early life, how you went upon the stage,

hope, I must await your answer. Pity the sorrows of a poor old man, and even telegraph 'Yes,' rather than keep me in suspense. What's a week to an able-bodied low comedian? Child's play! Why you'll be wanting to throw in morning performances as well to keep you from rusting. It really is a *chance* for you—avail yourself of it and bless me, and I'll bless *you*, and Hollingshead will bless us both, and Chute will bless us all.

"With my intermediate blessing, ever faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

where, why and how, with your experiences between the acts, and so on."

"I will try."

"You will never have a more interested audience," I said, "though I come in with an order."

"A regular Oliver-Twister, always wanting more," he said, laughing; "but you must give me a few minutes to think. I often wish I could smoke; perhaps if you have a cigar it will help me: always think it must be soothing to smoke, settles you down they say; never settled me down, quite the other way. Wasn't it Byron who made one of his ne'er-do-well heroes, who was advised to settle down, say, '*Settle down*, that's easy enough; my only difficulty is to *settle up*'?"

# V.

## CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD, MANHOOD.

A little London boy in the country—Truant and playgoer in the city—East-end and city theatres—Toole as "Antonio," "Jacob Earwig," and "Daggerwood"—First appearances on the regular stage—Clerk in a wine-merchant's office—The murder of O'Connor—Sergeant Ballantyne and Charles Kean—Toole's first appearance as a professional actor—From Dublin to Edinburgh—A bad omen turns out well—Hard work—Farewell as a stock actor—Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wyndham—Dublin wit—First appearance as a professional actor in London—St. James's and the Lyceum—On tour as a star—First meeting with Irving—A compact.

### I.

"It was towards the close of an Autumn day, in the year 1838," writes that most genial and accomplished of critics, Mr. E. L. Blanchard, "when passing through the village of Shorne, where I had been exploring the green lanes of the neighbourhood, that I fortuitously witnessed the following scene:—A little boy, scarcely six years of age, was the centre of an admiring group of urchins, who seemed in a most exuberant state of delight

at each fresh comicality of the entertainment, which seemed to consist of an imitation of the sounds of a farm-yard, with a few dexterous voices thrown in.

MR. E. L. BLANCHARD.

"It was over before I could discover the reason for the merry peals of childish laughter which reached me, but in a few moments the extremely juvenile monologist recommenced his performance,

without being aware that another person had been added to his audience. A dexterous arrangement of his pinafore, a twist of his child's cap, and a small stick snatched from the hedge, and there was the miniature figure of an old man tottering rather than toddling about the little garden, the

few words uttered in simulated tones helping to identify a resemblance which evidently kept the diminutive spectators in no doubt as to the fidelity of the likeness. Then came a change of face, another re-adjustment of the pinafore, and an altered tone, with a word and a whistle by turns. This was quickly accepted as the faithful por-

traiture of a comic countryman, well-known to the highly appreciative little assembly, and tiny hands were clapped gleefully as the voice of the rustic, simulated in childish treble, was heard to proclaim the necessity of giving to an old grey man. On my nearer approach, the festive company, entertainer and all, subsided into bashfulness. On making inquiry as to the name of the precocious young gentleman, I was told by a giggling little damsel that it was only John Toole, a little London boy down for his health."[1]

"Yes, it is quite true," says my host, "I have a glimmering recollection of the incident; but I have seen it so often in print that I can swear to every circumstance of the little comedy which my good friend Blanchard has immortalized. I can-

[1] Mr. E. L. Blanchard has recently retired from the field of active journalism after the devotion of a long life to criticism, miscellaneous literature, and dramatic writing. His father was a distinguished comedian, and at an early age the son became a constant contributor to dramatic and periodical literature. At five-and-twenty he was editor of *Chambers's London Journal*. A few years later he edited "Willoughby's Shakespeare," wrote entertainments for Woodin, Miss Emma Stanley, and other popular public performers, and supplied a couple of novels to the *Temple Bar*. For over thirty years he wrote the Christmas pantomime for Drury Lane; and for five-and-twenty years he was an honoured and active member of the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*. Mr. Blanchard is a ripe scholar, a most amiable and entertaining companion, a true friend, and in all the wide world one ma venture to say he has not an enemy.

not give you the names of the urchins; I daresay if I could it would be shown that, as by dint of my natural proclivities I have grown up into a comedian, the urchins in question have developed into playgoers, who more particularly appreciate comedy. I should not wonder that the giggling little damsel is now the mother—perhaps the grandmother, who knows?—of half-a-dozen other giggling little damsels, who have all inherited their mother's appreciation of genuine fun, and that they are among the most constant frequenters of Toole's Theatre. It is an advantage to be a comedian, because one can be arrogant without seeming to be so, one can compliment one's self as if one were only joking; the low comedian, more especially, can say all kinds of things which he really means, but which he knows will be taken as badinage, chaff, fun, everything but what it is; there are many true words said in the way of make-believe; but you wish me to be serious and I will; for we have to come to a serious point, eh? my birth, my childhood, my start in life—I might say *three* serious points, but I won't."

II.

"I WAS born in St. Mary Axe, in the City of London, on March 12th, 1832, a younger

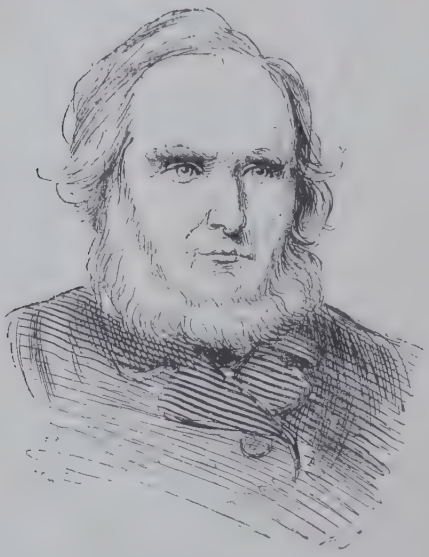
son, and therefore, as in the case of the aristocracy, had my way to make. I always think it is rather unfair that the eldest son should be born to the title and estates, while the younger has to be content with a choice of the professions. However, there is a certain amount of freedom in the position, and, like my friend Lewis Wingfield, I went in for the Stage.

"But I am anticipating. As I said before, I was born in the city, and will now add that I lived in the city, played marbles in the city, went to school in the city, played truant in the city, saw my first play in the city, and my first public dinner, and that to this day I love the city with all my heart—a strange, powerful, queer, dear old place, full of odd nooks and corners even now, although the architects and builders have been trying to wipe out its most cherished landmarks ever since I was a boy.

"My father, as you know, was the City Toast Master,—a position quite equal in importance, I used to think when I was a boy, to that of the Lord Mayor—I know that one of the great public banquets, at which I assisted in the ladies' gallery, appeared to be entirely my father's affair; nobody else seemed to have anything to do with it; everybody appeared to do exactly what he told them, whether it was to speak, to sit down, to

cheer or to sing songs and glees, including 'God save the Queen,' which they did sing with all their might, the ladies joining in the chorus.

"If I ramble somewhat about my early recollec-



SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

tions, you must not mind; it will be unconventional, as you say, and what I forget at the moment I shall pick up later on. I remember seeing Sheridan Knowles play in *The Hunchback* at the City of London Theatre, which was more or less

my happy hunting-ground. It stood in Norton Folgate, near the present Standard Theatre. I thought it an odd, remarkable kind of performance, and I fear the play did not make a very powerful impression on my youthful mind, though I liked almost anything in the shape of a play, delighted in the sawdusty smell of the theatre, in the gaiety of its light, and in its general odour of sanctity—no, I don't mean that—I mean mystery. I don't think I would make a note of that slip, it might seem like scoffing, and nothing is farther from my nature, but it seemed as if I was using a quotation, don't you know, and I felt bound to finish it. I saw at the same house, E. F. Saville, T. Lyon, and Charles Dillon, before he went to the West-end of town.

"There was an actor in those days named Dunn, who was very popular. He was the celebrated 'Jim Crow'—

> "'Turn about and wheel about and dance just so;
> Turn about and wheel about and jump Jim Crow.'

I used to give imitations of these and other actors. I spent all my pocket-money in seeing them act, and nearly all the time I could command in imitating what they did. The East-end houses were very good theatres, and I divided my attention, when absent from the City of London Theatre,

between the Pavilion and the Garrick. E. F. Saville was the famous 'Jack Sheppard' of the period. He was a relative of Helen Faucit. I always went to his benefit, and at that time a benefit meant something to the star: his admirers gathered round him and made much of him. 'Billy Rogers' was also a favourite at the Pavilion; he was the low comedian. The doors were opened at six in the evening, the performance commencing at half-past.

"I am afraid that occasionally, when I went home at night, I did not always give quite a correct account of how I had spent the evening. I am afraid I occasionally said I had been out with Marston, a youthful friend of mine, and I believe that I used the names of other companions as my imaginary hosts, and even referred to the amount of jam they had given me for tea, and so on, pardonable fictions I hope, intended rather to save my parents from worrying about me than to cover up any grave sins. In these days I had not seen a West-end theatre. Mrs. Honner was celebrated as 'Julia' in *The Hunchback*, and Miss Vincent occupied a foremost position in domestic melodrama. Osbaldiston had the City of London Theatre, and years afterwards he managed the Victoria; finally he became lessee of Covent Garden. I saw him in *The Stranger*, which was

often played in those days, and thought to be very touching and pathetic."

III.

"A WORD about the Victoria while I think of it. It was originally called the Coburg Theatre, after Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, who became King of the Belgians. It failed as the Coburg. After being closed for a long time, it was done up, and reopened as the Victoria, the very year I was born. It was not of much note when I was a boy; I never heard of it until I was quite a play-goer. The lessee was prosecuted for playing Shakspere, the prosecutor being the lessee of Drury Lane, whose patent rights, I believe, gave nim certain privileges in regard to performances of the works of the immortal bard. Stanfield, one of the greatest marine-painters, I suppose, that ever lived, began his career as a scene-painter at the Victoria, and it was here that Mr. Peter Borthwick, M.P., made his *début* as 'Othello;' the result did not encourage him to join our immortal profession. He became celebrated in other ways, was a first-rate speaker, enjoyed a successful public career, though not as 'Othello.'

"But to resume. Before I went on the stage I played in public, and my first part was at the

Sussex Hall, Leadenhall Street. I belonged to the City Histrionic Club.[2] The members paid for the hall. We gave a performance once a quarter. The audience was large—there was nothing to pay. On my first appearance, the programme opened with the trial scene from the *Merchant of Venice*. We had all agreed that none of us should appear in costume; evening dress was to be *de rigueur*. But our 'Shylock' deceived us. He turned up in the Jewish gaberdine, and with a regular make-up. It was too late, or I think we should have cut him out of his part. As 'Antonio' I was extra bitter on him when he gradually got the Merchant into trouble, and perhaps his breach

[2] Mr. Robert Rayner, honorary treasurer of "The Ingoldsby Dramatic Club," calls my attention to the fact that Mr. Toole was also a member of that society, and he encloses me a cutting from a local journal (the *South London Mail*) from which I make the following interesting extract:—"The history of the Ingoldsby Club is a very eventful one. It was founded by Messrs. J. G. Neeld, William Pink, and C. Bunker, on October 25th, 1860. In its very early days it was fortunate in possessing many members of great future promise. Mr. James Albery, of *Two Roses* fame; Mr. J. J. Dilley, the part author of *Alexander the Great;* Mr. Sydney Naylor, the pianist; Mr. William Holland, the people's caterer; Mr. R. Strong, J.P. and late M.P.; Mr. Wyndham, of the Criterion Theatre, and others, were all members and promoters—while Mr. J. L. Toole was a member for the first fifteen years of the club's existence, and also Miss Eliza Cook, the poetess, then residing in Walworth."

of agreement after all did no harm, though it must have made the gentlemen in dress-clothes look a little out of it. We had no scenery; the whole thing depended upon art—strict Art, and please to spell it with a capital A. After the 'Trial,' we played the first scene from *Boots at the Swan*. I was 'Jacob Earwig.' Then I gave a recitation, an election speech, a little thing of my own, which I sometimes do now. I was very much to the fore that night; I played in *Sylvester Daggerwood*. It was a popular piece in those days; it is a vehicle for imitations. There is a picture of Bannister and Suet in the two parts at the Garrick Club; the parts are a barrister and an author—'Daggerwood' and 'Fustian.' I gave something like five-and-twenty imitations of popular actors. What a programme it was! The audience got enough for their—orders. It ended with a farce called *The Mummy*, and Keeley Haleswell, the A.R.A., painted the sketches, which the old 'Antiquary' uses in the piece. Haleswell lived in the city—'and was always gay,' I was going to add, quoting the 'Little Fat Grey Man,' which your namesake used to sing so well. We all, for that matter, lived in the city, and Haleswell was one of us, the same clever, pleasant fellow he is to this day, and I have no doubt these property sketches, if we had studied them with knowledge, would have be-

tokened, in certain unmistakable touches of genius, the future Royal Academician."

IV.

"On a certain memorable benefit-night at the Pavilion, I was taken behind the scenes. There was an actor who used to give imitations of popular favourites. On this occasion, as Fate would have it, he disappointed the theatre, didn't turn up, couldn't get away from his other place, or was ill, or something or another; but his absence, making an ugly hiatus in the programme, caused a good deal of excitement behind. Now, I remember, it was Elphinstone's benefit. A man came up to me and said, 'Why don't you go on and take Taylor's place? you are quite equal to it, and it would be giving Elphinstone a great lift!' I shrunk back at the bare idea of it; but the man was very complimentary and pressing, and Elphinstone himself was good enough to say he would be obliged to me if I would go on, since he heard I should fill the bill with efficiency, or words to that effect. I felt my head swimming a little, not only with fear, but also with a desire to go on, and do all I knew. At last, boy as I was, I did it; I went on after an explanation, and gave them one after the other most of the imita-

tions I had been in the habit of giving at our little club, and whenever my companions desired them. The imitations went tremendously, my unknown friend who had proposed I should go on said Taylor was nowhere in comparison with my

MR. TOOLE'S FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE.

realization of the peculiarities of the East-end actors; I was delighted; all the fear I had felt disappeared once I was before the footlights.

"At that time I was a clerk in a wine-merchant's office. A day or two after my appearance at the Pavilion, some one came into the counting-

house and said they had seen me on the stage. Challenged by one of the firm, I was in such a funk that I denied it, but in a weak kind of way. After that first taste of the real footlights, I began to dream of becoming an actor in earnest.

"The first time I played to a regular audience, in a regular way, was at Ipswich in 1852, and it was under the name of John Laver. One of our clerks at the wine merchant's had gone on the stage, and was at Ipswich. He took an interest in my ambition, and suggested that I should go down and appear in the leading man's benefit as 'Sylvester Daggerwood.' If I would consent, he said, he and his friend Hill 'could get me an appearance.' I did consent, said at home I was going on a visit to some friends, and off I went to Ipswich. Kean occasionally played the part of 'Daggerwood,' and gave imitations, as you know.

"My Ipswich experience was very satisfactory. I scored, received the compliments and congratulations of the leading man, a heavy and impressive tragedian; and I returned to London more than ever determined to give up being a clerk in a wine-merchant's office."

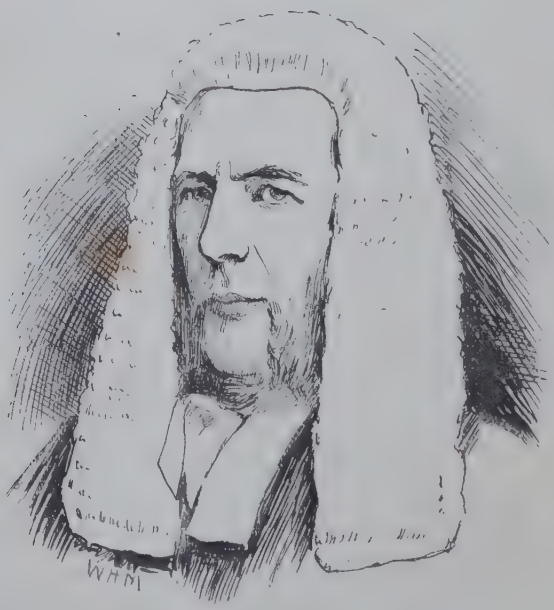
V.

"By the way, when I was that wine-merchant's clerk in the city, I knew O'Connor, whom the

Mannings murdered; he was a gauger, and not at all a pleasant fellow. I used to see him at the Docks; some of us were in the habit of playing jokes on him, but he did not take them well; he was grumpy, had no sense of humour—not what we boys called humour, at any rate—and we did not care for him; but when we heard he had been murdered and buried in quicklime under the hearthstone of his cruel assassins, we were awfully shocked, and indignant also. It created a great sensation as you know—the awful tragedy, as it was rightly called. The capture of the murderers, Mr. and Mrs. Manning, with whom the victim had been on visiting terms, made as much noise as the report of a victorious battle might. It was a case of Lady Macbeth over again; the woman was at the bottom of the mischief. Long afterwards I talked about it with Serjeant Ballantyne, who defended her, and he was quite ready to confess that he believed she started and partly carried out the awful business. She was a horrible woman, showy, good-looking, and had been lady's-maid in a high family.

"He was a remarkable man, Serjeant Ballantyne; used to tell good theatrical stories sometimes. He admired Charles Kean in *Louis XI.*, *The Corsican Brothers*, and *Mephistopheles*, and spoke kindly of him, but told funny stories about him. Kean had some quarrel with Albert Smith,

nothing of any moment. Smith had chaffed his acting or something, and Kean was mortally offended. Ballantyne and a friend of Kean's, who had never heard of the quarrel, were talking



MR. SERJEANT BALLANTYNE.

to Smith in the coffee-room of the Garrick. Kean watched them with a tragic eye. When Smith departed, Kean, folding his arms in a melodramatic way, strode up to his friend and exclaimed, 'Richard, my old friend, the friend of

my boyhood, I could not have believed that you would have consorted with that viper!'

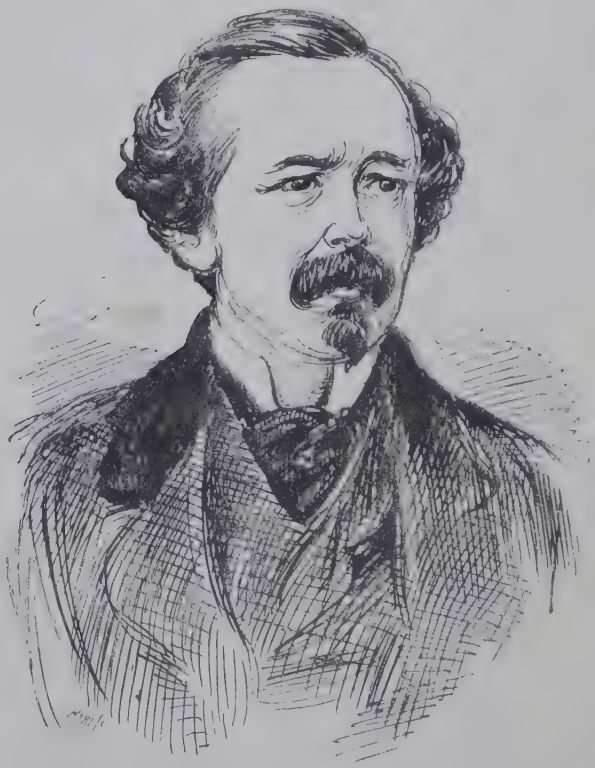
"There are many odd stories told of Kean, such as the ballet-girls coming to the wings and weeping at his pathos for the sake of his notice and certain little rewards; and on one occasion he is said to have addressed himself in bitter terms to an old super whom he had seen applauding Ryder, 'Wretch! Thou who hast eaten of my bread; thou who livest on my bounty, how could'st thou be base enough in thy ingratitude to applaud that man!'

"Some of these things are no doubt exaggerations, though Charles was particularly greedy of applause, as I fear we all are. It is necessary to us; at least we think so. If an audience doesn't applaud your big scenes, or laugh at your fun, you have reason to believe you are not pleasing them, and, of course, that must be very depressing—not that I speak from experience in that matter!"

VI.

"WELL, after my Ipswich adventure, I played at the Walworth Institute. We were amateurs; my friend Lowne was one of us, he is a serious city man now. One night Dickens came, and was very complimentary. Forster has mentioned the incident in his 'Life.' Dickens more than once

referred to the occasion in his kind way, years afterwards, when I came to know him well and to better understand the great genius he was.



MR. CHARLES DILLON.

"Soon after the Walworth success I took a holiday, and went to Dublin.

"Charles Dillon had heard of me having done

something, as he said, at the Walworth Institute, that had been very much liked, and he invited me to play at the Queen's in the Irish capital. That was a big thing in those days. *The Spitalfields' Weaver* was put up for me, and I made an immediate hit as 'Simmons.' I sent word to my wine-office people in London that I was not coming back again. I accepted an engagement of two pounds a week, and remained in Dublin for the season. It was at this time that I made the acquaintance of Robson,[3] as I have previously

[3] "Robson was, indeed, an actor of the highest stamp; in him the extremes of the sublime and the ridiculous came very near meeting—only that his acting ever kept preponderatingly sublime, and that even the loudest burst of laughter that greeted the wonderful little man's comic play and utterances had in them, maybe unconscious to actor and audience alike, a subdued undercurrent of sobs and tears. Old playgoers who may remember his burlesque renderings of 'Shylock,' 'Macbeth,' 'Masaniello,' and 'Medea,' will, I believe, assent to this view.

"I remember his truly marvellous performance of the part of 'Medea' in Robert Brough's burlesque. Before the piece began, I went behind the scenes with the author, where we found Robson in a state of extreme nervousness, as it had been credibly reported that the lady tragedian, whom he was about to imitate (*not* to travesty, mind, for there truly was nothing of the buffoon pure and simple in Frederick Robson), Madame Ristori, was actually in the theatre. Well, with this overpowering oppression upon him, he contrived to achieve a glorious success. His 'Medea' was a truly grand tragic figure, gracefully draped in a light veil of burlesque. She who had created the intensely tragic character of ill-starred 'Medea' was so deeply impressed by the little man's wonder-

mentioned. I stayed two seasons with Dillon at Dublin, where Mr. Robert Wyndham, of the Edinburgh Theatre, saw me and offered me an engagement at 3*l.* a week, which I accepted. On the 9th of July, 1853, I made my first appearance on the Edinburgh stage as 'Hector Timid' in the play of *The Dead Shot*. I had travelled from Dublin, and arrived in Edinburgh in the afternoon, very tired and weary. I put up at Milne's Hotel in Leigh Street, and after a rehearsal went to bed, fairly worn out. I left instructions with the landlady to call me and bring me a cup of tea at a certain hour, which would give me plenty of time to get to the theatre; but she forgot her instructions, and I was still sleeping soundly when a messenger arrived from the theatre to inquire for me. The curtain was up. I was in a terrible fright. I sprang out of bed, dressed, rushed to

ful tragi-comic reproduction of her own creation—which she had been led to believe by a 'kind friend' of Robson's would turn out a farcical caricature—that she could not refrain from there and then presenting to the great actor the flattering tribute of her gratification and admiration. She came round accordingly at once, escorted by that most courteous of gentlemen and most urbane of noblemen, Earl Granville, who joined the lady in overwhelming the shy man with well-merited compliments. When we had Robson to ourselves again, he cried like a child—partly with pleasure, partly with distress at his nervous awkwardness, which he said 'must have made me look like a fool.'"—"Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian," 1883.

the theatre, and was just in time to scramble upon the stage and take up my cue. In entering, I stumbled over a mat and almost fell, and this so worried and upset me that throughout the whole piece I was nervous and wretched. Next day, however, I was agreeably surprised to find the critics unanimous in their praise of my acting, specially pointing out how 'appropriate to the character of "Hector Timid" was the uneasy manner and faltering gait of the young comedian.' Everything, you see, had happened for the best, even the carelessness of my landlady, my accident, my nervousness, and all my disasters.

"While I was in Edinburgh during this engagement, Sam Cowell[4] was at the Royal, singing

[4] "July 1st, 1840, *Robert Macaire*, the part of 'Pierre,' head-waiter, by Sam Cowell, from the Théâtre St. Charles, New Orleans—his first appearance in Europe. According to a sketch of his life published in 1853, his mother was one of Murray's sisters, 'Sam' Cowell being the Edinburgh manager's nephew; his sister married Bateman, the American actor and manager. Cowell was an exceedingly clever comedian, and his musical abilities were considerable. He sang negro songs as he had heard negroes singing them out west. His 'Jim along Josey,' 'Yaller Busha Belle,' and 'Clara Cline' were inimitable performances. On leaving Edinburgh, a few years after this, he at once stepped into good positions in London and the provinces, latterly devoting himself exclusively to comic singing. He married Miss Ebsworth, of the Edinburgh company, and his daughters, Sydney and Florence, became in time great favourites in Edinburgh. He died March 11th, 1864, aged

his well-known and popular songs between the acts. I used also to sing 'Billy Barlow,' introducing fresh verses satirizing the follies of the day, and often getting in some local hits which went immensely. I gained considerable experience in Edinburgh, not only through the constant change of bill, but from acting with the stars who visited the Scotch capital. Miss Helen Faucit [5]

only 43."—"Annals of the Edinburgh Stage," by J. C. Dibdin. 1888.

[5] Helen Faucit (Lady Martin) was born in 1819, the daughter of Mrs. Faucit, an actress of remarkable ability. Lady Martin has both acted and read in recent years for charitable objects, and still retains much of that charm of manner which distinguished her acting in the zenith of her popularity. She made her *début* at Covent Garden Theatre on January 5th, 1836, in the character of "Julia," in *The Hunchback* and achieved a distinct and popular success. "From that moment," says the current volume of "Men of the Time," "she took rank as a leading actress, and became the most important member of Mr. Macready's companies during the production of his Shaksperian revivals at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Miss Helen Faucit was the original representative of the heroines in Lord Lytton's *Lady of Lyons*, *Money*, *The Sea Captain*, *Richelieu*, and the *Duchess de la Vallière*; in Mr. Robert Browning's *Strafford*, the *Blot on the Scutcheon*, and *Colombe's Birthday*; in Mr. Westland Marston's *Patrician's Daughter*, *The Heart, and the World*, and *Marie de Meranie*; in Mr. Troughton's *Nina Sforza*; and in many other plays. Her rendering of the Shaksperian characters, 'Juliet,' 'Beatrice,' 'Constance,' 'Imogen,' 'Hermione,' 'Cordelia,' 'Isabella,' 'Portia,' 'Rosalind,' and 'Lady Macbeth,' has been highly commended. Miss Helen Faucit obtained great success in

came, and with her I played 'Touchstone' in *As You Like it*; 'Cloten' in *Cymbeline*; 'Glavis' in *The Lady of Lyons*, and was complimented by the critics; indeed they were most kind to me, and so were the public. I had become a favourite the first week of my appearance, which was a very agreeable and important thing for me. Phelps came to Edinburgh on a starring tour, and I played many parts with him, and also with Charles Mathews. I believe I got through 'Antonio, at the Sussex Hall in the City, with credit, but I did not try that kind of part any more, I went in for the line of business I felt I could master, low comedy, eccentric comedy, and for those serio-comic parts for which I received so much kind encouragement from the press, both of London and

her representation of 'Antigoné,' and in *King René's Daughter*, an adaptation from the Danish, by Mr. Theodore Martin, now Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B., to whom she was married in 1851. This lady continued to appear on the stage at rare intervals after her marriage, latterly for public or charitable purposes only, her last appearances being as 'Beatrice' at Stratford-on-Avon, at the opening of the Memorial Theatre there in April, 1879, and at Manchester as 'Rosalind,' in October of that year, for the benefit of the widow of Mr. Charles Calvert, formerly manager of the Princess's Theatre, Manchester. Lady Martin is the authoress of a volume 'On some of the Female Characters of Shakspere,' viz. 'Ophelia,' 'Portia,' 'Desdemona,' 'Juliet,' 'Imogen,' 'Rosalind,' and 'Beatrice,' published by Messrs. W. Blackwood and Sons, 4to, 1885."

the great cities of the provinces. I have played as many as eighteen different parts in a week during my early experiences as a stock actor, some of them new studies entirely ; those were the days when an actor had to work like the proverbial nigger ; it made things easier for him later in his career, of course, but it was hard work, and no mistake ; I have often been studying another part while I have been playing a new one, and many a time, after rehearsal in the morning and acting at night, I have gone home to sit up studying a part for rehearsal the next day.

"After about eighteen months of this severe practical training, I was offered an engagement at the St. James's Theatre, under the management of Mrs. Seymour. Much as I liked Edinburgh, I was glad to try my luck in London. The engagement was not a particularly attractive one, the part in which I was to open being neither low comedy nor high comedy, neither funny nor serious ; nor was it, that I could make out, a character-part in which there was much to be done. But I went to London from Edinburgh, and without taking any formal leave. I opened at the St. James's on October 2nd, 1854, as 'Pepys' in Tom Taylor and Charles Reade's play of *The King's Rival*. The play was not a success. There was something wrong with it; what, I don't know. George Vanden-

hoff, Tom Meade, and Miss Glyn were in the cast. I had the farce of *My Friend the Major* pretty well all to myself after the piece of the evening. As a sheriff's officer, disguised as a friend, I got along all right, and the next morning received very encouraging and complimentary notices in the papers. There are actors and authors who say they don't read criticisms of their work; I do, and I confess that I have often benefited by hints and suggestions in that way. I afterwards played 'Pierre' in a piece called *Honour before Titles*, at the St. James's, and later filled a season with Miss Lydia Thompson in *The Spanish Dancers*.

"I don't know that I was altogether quite satisfied with these first efforts in town; I did not seem to have had an opportunity of playing the kind of parts I wanted, nor was I associated with what might be called a successful management. I had several offers to remain, but the openings did not attract me, and I went back to Edinburgh and rejoined Mr. Wyndham's stock company in my former position. More hard work, more acting with stars, more new appearances, fresh opportunities of playing what I liked. I was very happy; but in another year was once more tempted to the metropolis, this time by a flattering proposal from Mr. Dillon to join his company as its low comedian. I had had satisfactory experiences of

Mr. Dillon in Dublin; he was my first manager, and I felt great pleasure in receiving his offer and also in accepting it.

"When it was known that I was now going to leave Edinburgh for a long and important engagement in London, the public, my personal friends, my fellow-actors, and Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham organized for me a farewell benefit, which was quite a big event at the close of the season. Anxious to please the audience, I arranged a very varied and comprehensive programme, which included my first appearance as 'Paul Pry:' I played 'Bottom' in a scene from *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, and imitated Mrs. Florence's 'Yankee Gal' with her characteristic ballad of 'Sing song, Polly, won't you try me Oh!' Mr. and Mrs. Florence, especially the latter, had made a great hit in England in a similar line of business to that of Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams, whose portraits are in the Garrick. The Florences are both admirable comedians, and play with all their former *verve* to this day, and look almost as young as they did—well I will not say how many years ago. Florence's popularity has never waned in America in public or private, and he is one of the best of good fellows on both sides of the Atlantic, as you know.

"But to return to my farewell at Edinburgh, as

a stock actor, never to appear there again except as a star. After the fall of the curtain for the night, I was most warmly called for, and I made,

MR. TOOLE AS "PAUL PRY."

not quite my first public speech, but it seems to me as I look back that it really must have been my first. I know I was nervous and overcome; the audience was so large, so enthusiastic, and I had

received so much kindness from them.[6] It takes time to get at the Scotch people; they are not

[6] "The greatest assemblage that ever greeted a 'benefit' in this city was collected together at the Theatre Royal last evening to bid farewell to our popular comedian, Mr. J. L. Toole. But a few minutes elapsed from the doors being opened until every part of the house was crowded with the admirers of the young and versatile performer—the gallery and pit with the lovers of that broad farce of which Mr. Toole is a master—the boxes and stalls with the critical audience which think him greater still in developing the higher forms of the drama. So great was the crush that Mr. Mackenzie and his band were compelled to beat an early retreat behind the scenes, and their places in the orchestra, although more closely crammed and filled with the critical *élite* which frequent the stalls, were not less harmonious than the unseen musicians.

"Heavy as the amusements of the night might be to Mr. Toole, they were light to a sympathizing and enthusiastic audience. The programme was fresh, varied, and long. If Mr. Toole appeared in none of the comedies in connection with which we believe his name will be chiefly associated in this city, it is doubtless from a desire, on this the last night of his engagement in Edinburgh, to supply something new as well as most widely acceptable. Hence he appeared for the first time as 'Paul Pry,' with complete success, and likewise initiated a farce entitled *Your Life's in Danger*. In addition to this he appeared in *Domestic Economy*, where with Mrs. Wyndham's assistance, he vividly realized the old ballad of 'John Grumley;' as 'Bottom,' in the play-scene from *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and as the 'Yankee Gal,' in which character he rendered the quaint ditties of Mrs. Florence with singular felicity. Each separate appearance was a triumph, and when he doffed the professional costume to say a few farewell words, the loud and long-protracted cheers, with the

impulsive in their friendships; but when they know you and you know them, when confidence in each other is mutual, they are the staunchest friends you can have. You said, talking on this subject the other day, that good people are very much alike, and show their friendship very much in the same way, whatever their country; and I suppose this is true: but Northerners seem to be more serious people than Southerners, and more suspicious; they are apt to entertain doubts of the sincerity of Southern people; they need to prove you; and then comes the other side of their character—their firmness, their lasting powers; they never desert you. Nor do any other friends whom you can call friends, so far as that goes. The Dublin boys have always been true to me, and I have many treasured memories of Dublin.

"There is no other city in the United Kingdom that is brighter, gayer, more lively than Dublin. Perhaps a little of the gloss has been taken off it during the political agitation of the past few years, but as I knew it best, it was one of the most go-ahead, rollicking, jovial cities I ever was in—everybody with a share of the native wit of the Irish people—nobody with anything so pressing

bouquets showered upon him by the fair occupants of the boxes, constituted quite an ovation."—*Edinburgh Daily Express*, August, 1856.

to do in the way of business that he could not take his pleasure. When I went starring there, it was customary to make a two-weeks' engagement, but only to advertise one, the second being announced as in consequence of the success of the first. At the end of the first week I was leaving the theatre by the stage-door. There was the usual crowd of youngsters begging for coppers, and one, more pressing than the rest, said, 'Ah, Mr. Toole, mi darlint, give us a copper! Didn't I get you the re-engagement by applaudin' ye?'

"It was not a funny speech, the farewell remarks I made on the Edinburgh stage, it was an expression of gratitude for kindnesses I had received, and an assurance that I felt my invitation to act in London to be largely due to the favours I had received at their hands; I thanked everybody, management, colleagues, every part of the house, boxes, pit, gallery, orchestra, and the only laugh I got was in reference to the musicians. When alluding to their places being taken by the audience and their transference behind the scenes, I said, 'for once they are not in the orchestra, but are behind with their services.' It was to me quite a solemn ordeal, this saying farewell, and I felt it keenly; it was no make-believe, and in many respects I have a kind of sensation of home when I go to Edinburgh; and what a lovely city

it is! You may travel far to see its match for picturesqueness: and its historical associations make it a story in itself.

VII.

It will be interesting in this place to state that Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wyndham were for many years two of the most indefatigable workers in the theatrical profession. Both of them excellent actors, they managed together the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, with a thorough knowledge of their profession. Many distinguished actors began their careers under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham, who have in their retirement the great satisfaction of receiving and being received by ladies and gentlemen, who, mere beginners in their Edinburgh Theatre, are now in the foremost ranks of the profession, more than one or two having won a world-wide celebrity. Edinburgh was a hard school in the good old days of stock companies; it paid small salaries and it exacted laborious service, but its discipline and its traditions made or marred theatrical reputations; it was a school in which the fittest survived and the incapable came to grief. The history of the Edinburgh stage is the history of the rise of many of our best actors past and present. Some ten years ago Mr. Robert Wyndham was entertained

at a banquet at the Balmoral Hall, Edinburgh, by 120 leading citizens, "in recognition of his services to the community during a long career as a theatrical manager in that city." Sir Alexander Grant, Bart., Principal of the University, presided. In response to the very complimentary speech in which he proposed the toast of the evening, Mr. Wyndham said:—"Sir Alexander Grant, my lords and gentlemen,—To say that I feel embarrassed would ill express the emotion with which I rise to endeavour to acknowledge even in very inadequate terms the highly eulogistic manner in which you have been pleased to propose the toast of my health, and at the same time to thank my numerous friends present for the warm and enthusiastic manner in which they have been pleased to receive it—an enthusiasm which I fear proceeds more from the warmth of their own hearts than from any legitimate desert on my part. I must confess that my earliest theatrical aspiration was directed towards Edinburgh, and in order to prepare myself for any contingency that might arise, I thought that the proper thing to do under the circumstances was to study the character of 'Young Norval' in the tragedy of *Douglas*, which I accordingly did, and selected at the same time a wide field for the operation, for I committed the words to memory among the cloisters of Stonehenge, in the middle of Salisbury

Plain. (Applause.) I think it was somewhere about the years 1836 or 1837 that I first made my appearance in the good old town of Salisbury ; but I was not very successful, for the local critic of the day stated that he did not think the young gentleman who appeared last night in the character of 'Young Norval' was ever destined to set the Thames on fire. (Laughter.) This was very severe, considering, as Sir Alexander has stated, that I paid the manager 20*l.* for the right to make a fool of myself for one night. (Renewed laughter.) I, however, worked steadily on, undergoing at times all the vicissitudes inseparable from the early career of most professional men, till after many years of probation, I found myself announced to appear at Birmingham in the character of 'Romeo' to the 'Juliet' of Miss Ellen Tree, afterwards Mrs. Charles Kean. This was perhaps the most successful engagement I ever played in my life, for it was there I first met my wife. (Laughter and applause.) Subsequently I had the honour of appearing before Louis Philippe at the theatre in the Tuilleries, enacting the character of 'Colonel Freelove' to the 'Lady Elizabeth' of the celebrated Madame Plassy, in the comedietta of *A Day after the Wedding*. At length my time came for appearing in Edinburgh, and never shall I forget the impression made upon me when I first beheld

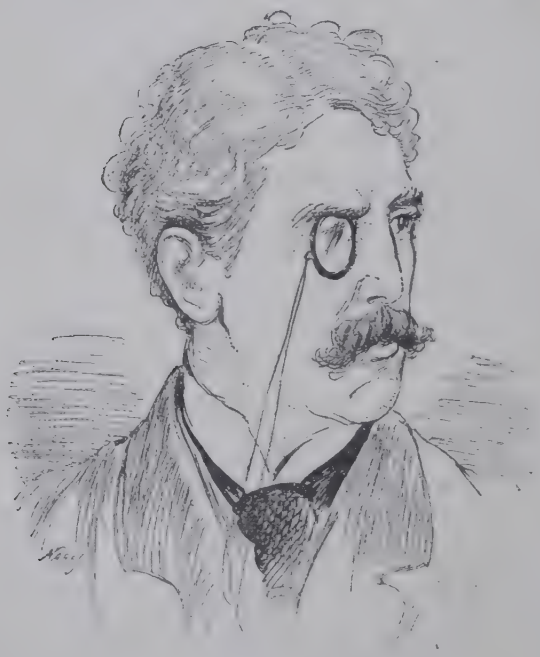
this magnificent city. Coming as I did from Glasgow, where it sometimes rains—(laughter)—I could scarcely fail to be impressed with the sight before me. The Castle, with its green slopes, the Scott Monument, Calton Hill in the distance, with the fine old town, as it were, keeping watch and ward, felicitously illumined with a spring sunshine, filled me at once with admiration at the brilliant sights before me, and with awe to think that I was so soon to appear before an Edinburgh audience, distinguished at once for its high culture, great intellectual refinement, and critical acumen. I made my first appearance on rather an ominous day—the 1st of April (laughter) in the year 1845, which date counts so far back that my friends frequently joked me, and said I was out in the '45 —(laughter)—the character which I played being 'Sir Thomas Clifford' to the 'Julia' of Miss Helen Faucit, in Sheridan Knowles's play of the *Hunchback*, and I believe that on the whole I was tolerably successful. I then laboured hard in my vocation, and upon the secession of Mr. Murray from the Theatre Royal some kind friends insisted, much against my will, that I should undertake the management of the Theatre Royal, assisting me at the time not only with money, but what was, if possible, of equal importance, their hearty goodwill and co-operation. Since then their kindness has

known no bounds. They have presented me with everything the heart of man could wish for, and now as a culmination to that kindness they have invited me to this grand banquet, so that now I fear there is nothing left to present me with unless the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Council should come to the rescue and present me with the freedom of the city. (Laughter and applause.) Circumstances of a family nature have rendered it desirable that I should reside for a considerable portion of the year in England; but I hope occasionally to revisit the glimpses of the moon—although not I hope to make night hideous—and appear before you in my professional character—(applause)—renewing at once my acquaintance with my old friends, and visiting again what I still hope I may be permitted to call the land of my adoption. But, gentlemen, whether I reside in England, Ireland, or indeed across the broad Atlantic, my heart must be indeed untrue to its instincts should I ever cease to hold in affectionate remembrance my dear, kind, warm-hearted Edinburgh friends." (Loud applause.)

VIII.

"I OPENED at the Lyceum in September, 1856," continued Mr. Toole, "as 'Fanfaronade,' to Dillon's 'Belphegor,' and with Miss Marie Wilton

(now Mrs. Bancroft), who on that occasion made her first appearance in London. Dillon's 'Belphegor' was a fine romantic piece of acting,



MR. BANCROFT.

strong, picturesque, and pathetic. I liked the piece, and the leading man. Miss Wilton, a clever, merry little actress, was the boy 'Henri,'[7]

[7] "At the Lyceum I recall Charles Dillon's fine performance in *Belphegor*. I sat that evening by my mother's side, and in

and afterwards 'Perdita,' in a burlesque of *The Winter's Tale* called *Radita, or the Royal Milkmaid*, by William Brough, which followed the play of *Belphegor*. Miss Wilton had come to London from Bristol and Bath, where she had been the bright particular star of the local burlesques. Many other prominent actors and actresses were favourites in Bristol before they came to London, notably the Terrys, both Kate and Ellen, Mrs. Kendal, the two Rignolds, Mrs. Labouchere as Miss Hodson, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Stirling, the latter as Miss Cleveland.

"I was two seasons with Dillon, and between whiles, when the vacations came, used to go starring, more particularly to Edinburgh, with a small company of my own.

"It was here that I first met Irving about the year 1857; but I did not see much of him at that time; I was only playing a very brief engagement. I met him later at Manchester, where our friendship commenced. He was the leading man at Man-

the touching scene between the mountebank and his son, we little thought that the pretty girl who made us cry by her pathetic acting as the boy 'Henri,' in which she first appeared in London, would be my future wife. At the beginning of the new year I saw her for the second time as 'The little fairy at the bottom of the sea' in *Conrad and Medora*."—Mr. Bancroft's narrative in "Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft on and off the Stage."

chester and was very much liked. He was always a very studious and careful actor, always made remarkable and complete studies of his characters. There was nothing conventional about what he did. He seemed, so to speak, always to have got inside the part he played, and to have learned something new about it; not new in the sense of being simply new, but something belonging to the part that other actors had not found out. He used to go up to Calton Hill in Edinburgh at all hours to study, and somehow this was considered odd, but he was a little odd, that is to those who did not know him. 'Talking of Henry Irving,' a person said to me in Manchester, 'Oh, he's mad, mad as a hatter; he's going to play "Hamlet" one of these days!' Whatever part he played, little or big, he always made it stand out, dressed it characteristically, made it up artistically, worked out every detail and suggestion that could possibly belong to it. I was partly instrumental in inducing him to go to the Princess's, where he made his first appearance in London in a piece called *Ivy Hall*.

"When Irving was a lad he recited at Crosby Hall, London, and I used to recite at Sussex Hall; I often wish we had known each other then. Byron was very fond of Irving, had a great opinion of him; Irving made a big mark as 'Bob

Gassitt' in his *Dearer than Life*. I had many a 'Bob Gassitt' to play with me, but never one who played it with the reality and truth that Irving put into the part. One often hears people talk about luck in a man's success, and I have heard it applied to Irving as a reason for his position; but people who speak of Irving in this way do not know how hard he has worked for his success. It was as 'Chevenix' in *Uncle Dick's Darling*, that he impressed Dickens so strongly. Dickens thought him in his make-up and manner a little like Dombey. He said of Irving, 'that young man will be a great actor.'

"What I admire about Irving[8] is the calm, steady

[8] "John Henry Brodribb Irving was born February 6th, 1838, at Keinton, near Glastonbury, and educated at Dr. Pinches' school, in George Yard, Lombard Street, London. He made his first appearance on the boards of the Sunderland Theatre, September 29th, 1856, and came out next at Edinburgh, February 9th, 1857, remaining there for rather more than two years and a half. On September 25th, 1859, he appeared at the Princess's Theatre, where he remained about three months. He proceeded in April, 1860, to Glasgow, the theatre of which town was then under the management of Edward Glover, and remained there until the 29th of the following September. After this he went to Manchester Theatre Royal, and continued to play there up to April 1st, 1865. From January, 1866, to July in that year, he was engaged at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Liverpool, and on July 30th was engaged to play, with Miss Kate Terry, at Manchester, by Mr. Dion Boucicault, in an original play of his entitled *Hunted*

way in which he has marched to the front, and the gentle, gracious, unostentatious way in which

*Down*. This led to a London engagement, when he came out at the St. James's Theatre as 'Doricourt' in the *Belle's Stratagem*. In December, 1867, he proceeded to the Queen's Theatre, and subsequently acted in the provinces from time to time, as well as at various London houses. In May, 1870, he transferred his services to the Vaudeville Theatre, where he appeared as 'Digby Grant' in Mr. Albery's comedy of the *Two Roses*, which character he sustained for 300 consecutive nights. His subsequent appearance, November 20th, 1871, was at the Lyceum Theatre, in the *Bells*, founded on MM. Erckmann-Chatrian's popular novel of the 'Polish Jew.' He afterwards represented the principal characters in Mr. Wills's dramas of *Charles I.* and *Eugene Aram*, 1873, and 'Richelieu' in Lord Lytton's play. His representation of 'Hamlet' at the Lyceum Theatre (October 31st, 1874) produced a great sensation among the playgoing public, and opinion was at first much divided as to the merits of the performance, but it is now generally admitted that by his rendering of this and of other Shaksperian parts Mr. Irving has placed himself at the head of English tragedians. *Hamlet* was played for 200 nights, the longest run of the play on record. He appeared in *Macbeth*, September 25th, 1875, in *Othello* in 1876, and next as 'Philip' in Lord Tennyson's drama of *Queen Mary*. Afterwards Mr. Irving played his Shaksperian parts in the provinces, in Scotland, and in Ireland. In January, 1877, Mr. Irving added to his Shaksperian repertory by playing *Richard III.* at the Lyceum. In May of the same year he undertook the dual characters of 'Lesurques' and 'Dubosc' in *The Lyons Mail*. On June 8th, 1878, he played the title *rôle* in *Vanderdecken*, a poetical drama by W. G. Wills. The withdrawal of Mrs. Bateman from the Lyceum gave Mr. Irving supreme control over the theatre, of which he had long been the mainstay. It opened under his management on December 30th, 1878, when

he has kept there. He might have been excused, as the world goes, if he had 'put on side' and even forgotten some of his friends, but he is just the same kind, generous fellow. He always was careless about money, lavish in his hospitalities—give-you-all-he-had kind of hospitality—whether it was a banquet worthy of a prince, or in his early days a chop and glass of ale. He has not altered one jot, except if it were possible to be a better fellow in his well-deserved prosperity than he was when he would occasionally curtail his courses at dinner in order to buy some little property for some new part, or to procure some book he wanted to read, in the way of his work.

he played the part of 'Hamlet' for 100 nights. The most remarkable incidents of Mr. Irving's management have been the production of *Othello* (in which he alternated the parts of 'The Moor' and 'Iago' with Mr. Edwin Booth), *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Cup*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Faust*, all of which have been played in conjunction with Miss Ellen Terry. A public banquet was given to Mr. Irving at St. James's Hall on July 4th, 1883, shortly before his departure with the Lyceum company for a theatrical tour in the United States. A second visit to America was paid in 1884, and before its close Mr. Irving delivered an address to the students of Harvard University on the art of acting—an event equally remarkable in the annals of the University and of the stage. He gave a similar lecture, by the invitation of the Vice-Chancellor (Mr. Jowett), at the New Examination Schools, Oxford, on June 26th, 1886. In the summer of 1886 Mr. Irving and Miss Terry again paid a visit to America, returning to London in September."—"Men of the Time."

"You see a tragedian has to go deeper into the mysteries of life than a comedian who sticks to his own line; not that Irving is not a comedian of the first class, as he is a tragedian; I should think he is, look at his 'Jingle,' his 'Jeremy,' his 'Digby Grant;' but as I was saying, the tragic muse takes an actor into lines of literary and poetic study from which the low comedian's line of business is entirely free; Irving was always after queer old books, or bits of costume, or curious daggers and swords; I suppose each line of business on the stage has its own special advantages, but I have often thought that the tragedian scores as against the low comedian when there is a bad house. For instance, in *Hamlet*, if the melancholy Dane sees there is a bad house it rather helps than injures his acting. The melancholy Dane becomes all the more melancholy when he sees a miserable account of empty boxes, and that is all the better for his acting, his melancholy is all the more natural; but the low comedian who has to make the audience laugh, it is very hard for him; he finds no assistance in the bad house; it lowers his spirits, and he lets off his jokes as if they were damp fireworks, and he knew they would fizzle, and that's just what they do.

"You think I had better get back to my London engagements? Where was I when I

went starring into the provinces?—First at the St. James's, then at the Lyceum."

"We might now, I think, pass on to your Adelphi experiences?"

"Very well; we will chat all day to-morrow and the rest of the week, if you will promise to go with me to the North—York, Whitby, Harrogate; it will be a holiday for us both; after my illness it will be like making my *début*. I feel quite nervous, not having acted for so long, and we can do a lot of 'reminiscencing' in the country. Is it a bargain?"

"Yes; and a very pleasant one."

# VI.

## AT THE ADELPHI.

Engaged by Benjamin Webster—Wright—Toole's first appearance at the Adelphi—Webster a great actor, but not sufficiently appreciated—*The Willow Copse*—"Idiots who would laugh at a funeral"—Queer notions about acting—"Caleb Plummer"—A policeman in difficulties—"Stephen Digges"—Stories of Paul Bedford—Edmund Kean at Bath—Wright and Bedford in Lancashire—The man in the hob-nail pumps—Bob Keeley and Miss Woolgar in *Janet Pride*—Buckstone, Wombwell's show, and Edmund Kean—The magnanimity of "the Roscius of the World"—Leah and the Batemans—"Joe Bright."

I.

"At the close of Dillon's management at the Lyceum, I went on a starring tour in the provinces. One morning I received a letter from Mark Lemon, editor of *Punch* and the author of many plays and innumerable songs (including, by the way, 'Bob Simmons's Courtship'), telling me that Charles Dickens had strongly recommended me to Mr. Benjamin Webster, of the Adelphi, with a view to the management offering me an engagement. I afterwards had a long talk with Lemon, in town,

upon the subject, and agreed to join the Adelphi Company as Wright's successor. It was not until I had been warmly advised to do so that I consented; I dreaded the comparisons that might be made between myself, a young actor, and Wright,

MR. WRIGHT.

an established favourite and a very clever comedian. Wright had retired through ill-health, but to my chagrin, not to say alarm, I heard he was coming back just as I had signed my engagement for the line of business that had belonged to him. It was conceded to me, however, that there should

be an amicable division of parts. The position troubled me at the time; I admired Wright as an actor, and was too modest, I hope, to desire to put myself in competition with him so long as he was capable of acting. No strain or friction arose between us or the management, and poor Wright did not remain long. Within a few weeks of his reappearance he was compelled again to withdraw. He went to Boulogne for rest and change, and died there.[1]

[1] "Then there was Edward Wright, the king of comedy, farce, and burlesque; 'Jolly Ned,' as Robert Brough used to call him, whose very face was a fortune in itself to a comic actor. Every surviving middle-aged playgoer must remember him with heartfelt gratitude for the many hearty laughs he made every one enjoy who ever had the happy privilege to 'drink him in with eye and ear.' Even with one to succeed him so excelling in every line and shade of the *vis comica* as J. L. Toole, the remembrance of his 'Muster Grinnidge' will always stand out in bold relief. It is really not too much to say that his inimitable performance of the part contributed most materially to clothe the *Green Bushes* with such wondrously enduring verdure. Even as I am penning these lines I see his unapproachable 'Paul Pry' rise before me in the mirror of my mental vision, his marvellous 'Marmaduke Magog,' 'Tittlebat Titmouse,' his 'Dick Swiveller,' his 'Bill Lackaday the Foundling,' and ever so many more of his humorously grotesque characterizations. I have seen many, many actors in the course of my long career, and a great many of them on the best terms with their audience; but I never, never met with one who could safely venture to take such astonishing liberties with the public as Edward Wright habitually did, and was

"He was a curious fellow, Wright, very simple in his habits, and lived outside London, devoting his leisure to farming in a small way. I think it was pigs. One night a countryman was admitted behind the scenes to see him on business. The business was the sale of a pig; it was a celebrated breed, I believe. He discussed the matter with the dealer at the wings. Wright was the seller, and it was not until he was on the stage that he accepted the dealer's offer. He did it in an aside, while he was speaking his part.

"During the evening he generally took some slight refreshment. On one occasion it was black puddings (the Garrick Club still keeps up its traditional reputation for black puddings), obtained from a celebrated maker. Wright at that time was attended by a new dresser. After the first act (I think the play was *The Poor Strollers*) he handed to the man his frugal but savoury fare, saying, 'Cut them in half and heat them.' During his wait in the next act he went to his room to enjoy his repast, but on asking for the puddings the dresser said, 'I've eaten them, as you told me to do.'

"Wright was the original 'Simmons' in *The*

ever ready and willing to do."—"Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian."

*Spitalfields Weaver*, and he did a strange thing in the character when the Queen went to Her Majesty's Theatre. It was a State visit. Billington played 'Brown.' The Royal Beefeaters were on the stage, ranged under the Queen's box. 'Simmons,' you know, in one scene is troubled about where he shall put his hat. Wright looked about here and there, and finally hung it on one of the halberds of the Beefeaters. The face of the man was a study; so was Wright's, of course. The Beefeater maintained his state just as stolid and firm as if nothing had happened. The Queen laughed heartily; so did the Prince Consort.

"An incident occurred during the illness of Munyard, second low comedian at the Adelphi, which speaks volumes for Wright's kindly nature. It was the custom of the management to stop an actor's salary if incapacitated from acting through illness or for any other cause. I was ill once, and could not act for three nights, so can speak from experience. Munyard was ill for ten months. Moreover, he was poor, and his salary was of very serious importance to him. Notwithstanding the rule of the theatre, he received his salary every week, and after his long affliction, when he could once more return to his duties, he thanked one of the principals, Madame Celeste, and asked her to express his gratitude to Mr. Webster for gene-

rously sending him his salary every week during the whole of his illness. Madame Celeste replied that there must be some mistake, as Mr. Webster never paid salaries during illness, whereupon it was discovered that Wright had sent the money as if it had come in the ordinary way from the management.

"I saw Wright play 'Paul Pry,' but Liston's performance of the original was, of course, long before my time. Wright was very droll, sometimes a trifle coarse, but he had been encouraged in this by his audience, who liked broad fun, and had inherited, perhaps, some of the rough tastes of still older playgoers. It was not that he was coarse in words so much as in suggestion, and it was the sort of coarseness that was not considered offensive by our grandfathers. He had a rollicking humour, remarkable facial power, and was in perfect sympathy with his Adelphi audience. He gave an individual touch of humour to the most trivial lines and incidents in any part he played, and I have heard old playgoers say he was very much like Liston."

II.

"I MADE my first appearance at the Adelphi in *Good for Nothing*, and an opening sketch by

Edmund Yates, in 1858. In January, 1859, I appeared in the burlesque of *Asmodeus*, and in the following May I played 'Spriggins' in *Ici on Parle Français*, under circumstances already explained. My next part of any importance was 'Augustus de Rosherville,' in *The Willow Copse*, a character previously played by Wright. When the piece was over, Webster said 'Come to my room, Toole, I want to see you.' I went. He opened a safe, and produced a small bottle of very choice whisky, of which he took sparingly and helped me to a glass. 'It will do you good,' he said; 'you were capital to-night, my boy—first rate!' Then he checked himself. He was a manager as well as an artist. As the latter he was most appreciative; as the former he had to consider the question of salaries; and I often laughed afterwards at the apparent struggle between his artistic desire to be generous and his managerial policy of economy. However, he was unmistakably pleased with my work, and we got on together exceedingly well. I had a great respect and admiration for him. He was liberal in business, and his instincts were thoroughly artistic. Although his great talent was acknowledged, I sometimes think he was not sufficiently understood or appreciated. He had a peculiar burr in his speech and a curious habit of jerking out his sentences, but

both these mannerisms were effective and characteristic, and he was one of the most earnest and conscientious actors I ever knew. His 'Luke Fielding,' in *The Willow Copse*, was full of his peculiar genius for domestic drama. It had one scene that was pathetic in the extreme. I have cried at it myself, and I never knew him play it without the tears streaming down his cheeks. It is the scene where the supposed dishonour of his daughter is made manifest to him. 'Come with me, we have no longer a place among the honest and the good,' were, I think, the words which take him off from among the neighbours and friends before whom the disgrace of his child has been pronounced.

"In *Janet Pride*, *Masks and Faces*, *One Touch of Nature*, and *The Dead Heart*, I cannot imagine Webster having an equal; it seemed as if the dramatic heroes of those touching plays were imagined, designed, and created for him. Poor fellow, he was dreadfully insulted one night by a remark in the gallery. It was at the time when one of those curious catch-sayings, or street-gags, was in vogue, 'How's your poor feet?'—an idiotic question which *gamins* put to each other without rhyme or reason. 'My heart is dead!' said Webster in the play, and with his usual thrilling emphasis; in the midst of the dead silence a gallery

boy called out, 'How's your poor feet?' Webster growled anathemas on the ruffian, not loud but deep, and the audience let the remark pass without either a laugh or a 'hush.' In the excitement of the scene probably but few of them heard it. We

MR. BENJAMIN WEBSTER.

were all on, Paul Bedford and myself among the rest—it was the revolutionary scene—the piece had had a long run, we had nothing to do in the scene, and we could not restrain our laughter, but I need not say we did not indulge our mirth in sight of the audience, nor did we mean Webster

to see it, but he did, and went to his room including us in his growls as 'idiots who would laugh at a funeral or grin at a murder, heartless fools;' but he smiled at the incident himself soon afterwards.

"I remember dining out once with Webster, when we met a somewhat pretentious gentleman, who had queer notions of acting, and expressed one of those outside views which astonished Webster beyond measure. 'The fool!' was all he had the patience to say in the way of comment. The fool had said to Webster, in reference to his great scene in *The Dead Heart*, where he is brought out of the Bastille, old and ragged, 'Why do you play such a part as that, Mr. Webster?' 'Why?' said Webster; 'I don't understand you.' 'It is all right,' said the fool, 'in the first part, where you are clean and well dressed; but if I were a manager, and could do as I pleased, I should make some of my employés play the ragged and dirty business; I wouldn't be dressed up in rags and tatters.' 'But that is the part, my dear sir,' said Webster. 'I daresay,' replied the fool, 'but it wouldn't be the part for me; if I was the master I'd make others do that sort of thing.' And yet the fool was an architect, and evidently a person of some intelligence; he was in perfect earnest, was rather a showy fellow, and, no doubt, had in

his eye the romantic heroes which he would play if he were an actor—cavaliers in satin cloaks, mashers in costume, and so on.[2]

[2] On the death of Mr. Webster, July 8th, 1882, a correspondent of the *Observer*, having in his possession an interesting letter written by the famous actor, added to the general information about his birth and parentage the interesting fact that he was a near relative of the celebrated Daniel Webster, and that his grandmother was Miss Buck, a Yorkshire lady, who was cousin to the gallant explorer, Captain Cook. The *Observer*, in its estimate of the artistic merits of Mr. Webster, said :—"As an actor Mr. Webster was full of vigour, genius, and originality; in personations such as those of 'Lavater,' 'Tartuffe,' 'Belphegor,' 'Triplet,' and the hero of *The Dead Heart*, he made a marked impression on the minds of the most thoughtful students of the drama, and proved that as a devoted disciple of his art he laboriously endeavoured to reach perfection in every part he studied. In his hands everything bore the stamp of an earnest conception, and in looking back over his extraordinary *répertoire*, it is impossible not to be struck by the variety of the characters he assumed, and not to admire the steadfastness of purpose with which he gradually worked his way to renown and prosperity. Independently of histrionic work, Mr. Webster displayed his knowledge of the resources of the stage as a dramatic author of no mean capacity. In 1832 he wrote the famous drama of *The Golden Farmer*, and since that time, including adaptations from the French, a hundred pieces have been connected with his name. The late manager and actor was proud of his profession and devoted to its best interests. He was a warm supporter and a prominent official of the oldest and best theatrical funds, and he was the founder of the Royal Dramatic College, the intention of which was philanthropic and bold, though its career was not destined to be successful. Mr. Webster was a man of very remarkable physical and mental vigour; until a late day he possessed a

III.

"*Paper Wings* was produced at the Adelphi in 1860. It was by Watts Phillips. I played 'William Kite.' By permission of Mr. Webster I was cast for 'Enoch Flicker' in the same author's drama called *A Story of* '45. It was done at Drury Lane. It was a part in which one had a chance of combining humour with pathos, and I was complimented by the author on my interpretation of the *rôle*. On the 1st of March I made my first appearance in a character in the line of 'Enoch Flicker' to this extent, that I was serious, as I had had to be in 'Flicker.' Of course 'Caleb Plummer' was different, but I had not made my mark in purely low comedy parts until I played 'Flicker.' A version of *The Cricket on the Hearth* had been done, but it was not a success, and Boucicault suggested to me a more dramatic and ambitious version of the story, in which I consented to play, fearing at the same time that I was making a new departure that I might perhaps

vivid memory, and his conversation and reminiscences were the delight of those who listened to him. He enjoyed extraordinary health, and was a keen sportsman and excellent shot, well known some years since in North Wales, where he had a pleasant and picturesque sporting estate. His full name was Benjamin Nottingham Webster, and he was a descendant of the Derbyshire branch of the family."

not justify. I read Dickens, and tried at home and while about in the streets to put myself in the position of Caleb. I think I succeeded in getting inside the part. I know I felt for the sufferings

MR. TOOLE AS "CALEB PLUMMER."

of the poor old chap, and did my best to make my audience feel them, and if applause was any criterion that I had satisfied them, I had plenty of it, a very hearty call at the close, and next day the highest commendations of the Press.[3]

[3] "Best of all is the 'Caleb Plummer' of Mr. Toole, which is a piece of really good acting, in which none of the pathos

"*The Area Belle* was first produced in 1864, the authors being William Brough and Andrew

MR. PAUL BEDFORD AND MR. TOOLE IN "THE AREA BELLE."

Halliday. It became very popular; so much so that Paul Bedford cautioned Brough and Halliday

of the part is either sacrificed or caricatured, while every touch of Mr. Dickens's genial humour that still clings to it in the dramatic version is well reproduced. Mr. Toole's 'Caleb Plummer' is an advance upon everything he has yet done

against the possible vanity of imagining themselves rivals of Beaumont and Fletcher. There are two characters in the farce—a soldier and a policeman. Paul Bedford played the soldier, I played the policeman. It was the farce in which I first sung 'A 'Norrible Tale.'[4] We went to a photographer who had a place near Mr. Frith's studio at Bayswater. It was a fine summer afternoon. We sent on our costumes first, and dressed for the camera.

"While Paul was being focussed and taken, it

above the range of burlesque and farce."—*Examiner*, April 19th, 1862. "Mr. Toole's 'Caleb Plummer' is finished to the highest degree, with a greater depth of humour and pathos than, perhaps, this clever actor ever yet displayed."—*Times*, April 16th, 1862.

[4] Recently while chatting with Mr. E. L. Blanchard at his chambers in Adelphi Terrace, he referred to "that horrible tale" in order to point the moral of an excellent photograph of himself which was hanging over the mantelpiece. "You see this ring on my finger," he said; "it was given to me by my dear friend Toole—one of the best fellows in the world. He gave it to me because I would not, as the commercial phrase runs, make a matter of business of it. When the photographer was posing me for that picture he said, 'Have you any particular fancy as to your attitude, Mr. Blanchard?' 'I have not,' I said, 'except that I want you to make a picture of this ring,' and if you will look at the result you will see that I am somewhat ostentatiously showing my ringed hand. I thought to myself, when I am gone, dear Johnny Toole, if he sees my portrait, shall say, 'Well, he did not forget me—that is the ring I gave him.'".

occurred to me that I would stroll out into the street. The policemen wore the tall chimney-pot hat in those days. My get-up was perfectly correct, and I was in the habit of putting on an assumption of that peculiar la-di-da kind of lounge

MR. TOOLE AND THE POLICEMAN.

which more or less characterized officers before helmets. I had only walked a very short distance when, turning a corner on the other side of the road, the regular policeman of the beat made his appearance. Somehow or other he seemed to spot me at once. I turned carelessly to take a short

cut back, when he at the same time calmly crossed the street after me. I saw a reflection of him in a shop window. I hurried a little; he hurried a little. I ran; he ran. Fortunately I succeeded in getting to the photographer's stairs before he came up with me, otherwise I conclude I should have had an unpleasant experience. As it was, it required a thorough explanation before the real policeman consented to leave the premises without me. I daresay the element of jealousy entered into the question a little. Of course, a person of my tall, stalwart build, and in a spotless uniform, would be an apparition calculated to worry the usual occupier of the beat.

"During the same year I played the title *rôle* in *Stephen Digges*, a serio-comic piece adapted by John Oxenford from Balzac's novel of 'Le Père Goriot.'[5] The piece was the special attraction

[5] "Mr. J. L. Toole's annual benefit took place last evening, when, in addition to other entertainments, there was produced a new and original drama in two acts from the pen of Mr. John Oxenford, entitled *Stephen Digges*, written, we believe, expressly for Mr. Toole, although, when first projected, it might have been intended for Mr. Robson. Few indeed would have thought of inditing a piece involving not merely serious but tragic incidents for the admirable and highly popular comedian of the Adelphi Theatre; but after the exhibition of last night no dramatic writer will be slow in entrusting a serio-comic character to Mr. Toole, so decided was his success in the new part. . . . The whole interest of the play centres in 'Stephen

which I put up for my annual benefit. 'Digges' is one of those persons who make you laugh and cry, or should do if properly played. He is funny at first, then sorrowful. You are moved by his sensibility, and his affections, and presently stirred by his passion. The part appeals to an actor who can be both humorous and serious, as in 'Caleb Plummer,' and I enjoyed playing it: but though it was a success, it has somehow quite dropped out of my *répertoire*, as other pieces have, for no particular reason except perhaps that one may have too long a list of plays and characters.

"Between these and other new productions we had many revivals of favourite Adelphi dramas, among them *The Green Bushes*. During Wright's time this well-known play was frequently put up at very sudden notice. It was full of gags, which had originated with Wright and Paul Bedford. There was a pot-boy at an adjacent tavern who used to serve the theatre with its ale and stout, and who had all these gags by heart, and when-

Digges,' if we except the old servant 'Betsy,' who is an exceedingly well-drawn character. . . . These two characters were inimitably sustained by Mr. Toole and Mrs. Alfred Mellon. As for Mr. Toole, he has made for himself a new fame, and his acting to be thoroughly understood and appreciated must be witnessed."—*Standard*, September 15th, 1864.

ever the piece was revived, Wright would send for this boy and rehearse the gags with him. The boy not only remembered the gags, but every bit of business belonging to them."

IV.

'PAUL BEDFORD was a natural comedian, in the sense that he was naturally funny; he talked off the stage very much as he did on, always, and in all characters. He grew to be very fond of me, used to call me father, and generally when he did so prefaced it with a kind of whistle, or with a sudden blowing of the lips. It was the same action as that which always prefaced his 'I believe you, mi bhoy!' He not only saw the great Edmund Kean act, but acted with him on one occasion. It was at Bath. During Kean's engagement at Drury Lane, the illustrious tragedian took the coach, travelled all night, and arrived at Bath in time for the evening's performance. His secretary, Mr. John Hughes, preceded him to see after the rehearsals. Paul had only just joined the stock company at Bath, his native town, and when he was asked to play the 'Duke of Norfolk' to the eminent one's 'Richard the Third,' Paul was horrified and refused the part, but his manager

prevailed upon him to play it, offering to teach it him and to ensure his getting through it all right. 'Well, father,' he said, 'the great man came, and there was I in a grand new dress as the "Duke." It was the Bosworth-field scene where I got into trouble. When I described Richmond's army to Richard as a tattered host of greedy scarecrows, and so poor, so famished, that their executors, the greedy daws, fly hovering over their heads, I did not say daws, father—haw, haw—I said Jack-daws. The house burst into a laugh and so did Richard, and as I went off, my manager was in an awful way, but I did not know what I had done until he told me. At the close of the play Mr. Kean sent for me to his room, and I felt uncommonly ill, father; but I screwed my courage to the sticking-place, went in and at once implored the great man's forgiveness. "Make no apology," said the wondrous actor, "you have made me laugh more heartily than I have laughed for years." And would you believe it, father, he invited me to dinner, and that was the beginning of our friendship.' Paul was very proud of having been introduced to Sir Walter Scott, and it was a great delight to him to tell of Ballantyne, Scott's famous printer, having shown him the lions of Edinburgh.

"He was present at the opening of the first

railway by George Stephenson, when Mr. Huskisson was killed. The Duke of Wellington and Lord Brougham were among the company. Paul, in his serious moments, liked to speak of the fatality, more particularly dwelling upon the fact that political differences had divided Mr. Huskisson and the Duke of Wellington until that very day, when they made up their differences only an hour or two before Huskisson's death. But Paul was not often in a serious mood. He preferred fun to gloom, and one of his best theatrical stories, I think, was his account of an incident of a starring tour he and Wright made with Alexander Lee and Mrs. Waylett. It was a joint-stock affair. They engaged auxiliary talent, among whom were Tom Higgie, little George Wieland, Mr. Gates and his clever daughter Eliza, who danced. Being natives of Lancashire, the latter were very popular. Miss Gates was celebrated for her 'Poetry of Motion Dance,' something in the style of Taglioni.

"'It was our custom,' said Wright, 'in this speculation, for those who were not required on the stage, to take money and checks at the doors. Higgie and I one night at Bolton were thus engaged at the gallery pay-box; the house was crammed, and we were counting the money, when we paused to listen to the tramp of a pair of

very heavy boots on the stairs. Presently a stalwart young fellow appeared with a wonderful pair of hob-nail pumps.'

"'Show begun?' he asked.

"'Yes,' I replied.

"'How much t' see t' show?'

"'A shilling,' I said.

"'Oh,' he answered. 'Is there room for a lad loike me?'

"I said there was.

"He hesitated a moment, and then said, 'I say, my coveys, does Miss Gates dance Poatry ta Motion ta neight?'

"I had to ask Higgie, who understood Lancashire, what the distinguished foreigner was talking about.

"He explained that the young man desired to know if Miss Gates danced the Poetry of Motion to-night.

"'No,' I said; 'she does not.'

"'Then gie mi my money back,' he said.

"Not willing to return money, as a matter of principle, and desirous of pushing business, I explained that the company was a first-class London company, which included the celebrated Mr. Wright and Paul Bedford.

"'Oh, they be dashed,' was his prompt reply; 'gie mi my money back. If lass does na do ta

Poatry ta Motion, I wouldna gie a button for t'other stuff.'

"'I returned him his shilling, and as he pocketed it, and was about to descend the gallery stairs, he looked at us with a scornful laugh, and remarked, "Ah say, my swells, ta cove at cabin willna get

MRS. ALFRED MELLON (MISS WOOLGAR).

much a' that blunt after yo two kids have riddled t'gridiron."

"'This reflection upon our honesty as well as our art was rather irritating; but he had such wonderfully big hob-nailed boots!'

"Among the Adelphi revivals was *Janet Pride*. I followed my old friend Bob Keeley in the part of the clockmaker's boy. I had seen Keeley play the part, and I used to admire him in the scene

where he had to say good-bye to Miss Woolgar,[6] before she was to be removed on board the convict

[6] "Mrs. Alfred Mellon (*née* Sarah Jane Woolgar) was born in 1824. She made her professional *début* in London in September, 1843, at the old Adelphi Theatre, in a duologue entitled *Antony and Cleopatra*. At the beginning of her career Miss Woolgar's versatile talents were generally employed in burlesque, in which she attained great repute. Her name will, however, be more generally and favourably known in connection with the series of domestic dramas for which the old Adelphi, under Mr. Benjamin Webster's management, and during Madame Celeste's popularity, became famous. Among the more important of those in which Miss Woolgar played on the occasion of their first performance may be mentioned *The Flowers of the Forest* ('Lemuel'); *The Marble Heart* ('Marie'); *The Willow Copse* ('Meg'); *Généviève; or, the Reign of Terror* (the title *rôle* in succession to Madame Celeste); *The Dead Heart* ('Catherine Duval'), &c."

In her later years Miss Woolgar continued to act, and with success, in an endless variety of characters. "Monday, August 8th, 1864, in a new farce of some interest by T. J. Williams, entitled *My Wife's Maid*, Miss Woolgar played the leading character, 'Barbara Perkins.' In July, 1865, still at the Adelphi, first performance of Mr. Walter Gordon's play, *Through Fire and Water*, she performed the part of 'Honnor Bright.' Saturday, May 5th, 1866, first performance at the same theatre of Mr. Benjamin Webster junior's version of Victorien Sardou's 'La Famille Benoiton,' entitled *The Fast Family*, Miss Woolgar sustained the part of 'Clotilde.' In the following year, Thursday, December 26th, first appearance at the Adelphi of *No Thoroughfare* (Messrs. Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins), Mr. Charles Fechter in the leading *rôle*, Miss Woolgar played 'Sally Goldstraw.' After this date Miss Woolgar (Mrs. Alfred Mellon) seldom appeared on the London boards until 1872. From 1872 to 1875 she acted at various

ship. He was the comic lover of the piece, you know—the clockmaker's boy; but Keeley moved the house tremendously in that parting scene. He had to try and cheer Miss Woolgar, who was wrongfully sentenced, telling her that he had got the captain to let him go as a cabin-boy (one of those impossible things that are allowable on the stage), and therefore they would be on the same ship. The little chap's grief and self-denial were so real, his always serious face so serious, that the audience forgot him as the low comedian; and when the officer of the gaol laid a kindly hand upon

theatres in several revivals of plays of more or less interest. In March, 1875, first performance at the Adelphi of a dramatic version of 'Nicholas Nickleby,' from the pen of the late Mr. Andrew Halliday, she undertook the part of 'Mrs. Squeers.' The same year, in October, reappearance of Mr. Joseph Jefferson at the Princess's Theatre as 'Rip Van Winkle,' she played 'Gretchen;' and in 1877, at the same theatre, she performed her original character in *Lost in London*, produced at the Adelphi Theatre in 1877. On Wednesday, May 15th, 1878, a performance was given at Drury Lane Theatre in aid of a testimonial benefit to Mrs. Alfred Mellon (Miss Woolgar), in which the principal members of the dramatic profession took part. The result was in every sense most gratifying, and bore ample testimony to her personal worth and considerable merits as an actress. A sum of 1000*l.* was collected.

"Miss Woolgar married the late Alfred Mellon, a gentleman at one time well known in the musical world, and a composer of considerable ability, who inaugurated the series of Promenade Concerts now annually given at the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden."—"Pascoe's Dramatic List."

his shoulder, and told him it was time for him to leave, the look of utter sadness and sorrow in Keeley's face, and his dejected, but firm and resigned exit, were tender and touching beyond description."[7]

[7] The following appreciative biography of Robert Keeley appeared in the *Times* of February 3rd, 1869:—"Another link in the chain of old dramatic associations has been broken by the decease of that eminent comedian, Mr. Robert Keeley, who expired on Wednesday evening at his residence, Pelham Crescent, Brompton. Mr. Keeley had attained his seventy-fifth year. Few actors have more largely contributed to the amusement of the public; and the thoroughly original style and the peculiar richness of the humour of this excellent performer will be vividly remembered by all playgoers who can date their experiences from some thirty or forty years ago. In private life no actor was more heartily welcomed or more highly esteemed.

"Mr. Robert Keeley was born in the year 1798 at No. 8, Grange Court, Carey Street, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, being one of a family of sixteen brothers and sisters. At an early age he was apprenticed to Mr. Hansard, the then celebrated printer; but in the fourth year of his apprenticeship his predilection for the stage induced him to apply to Mr. Sims, the theatrical agent, and he made an appearance at Richmond, in Surrey, where so many novices have first tested their abilities. This was in the summer of 1813. . . . Hence he entered the Norwich circuit, then under the management of Mr. John Brunton, where he became a great favourite. In 1817 he came to London and joined Mr. Beverley at the West London, now the Prince of Wales's Theatre, where for two seasons he divided the low comedy with the late Harry Beverly. A visit to Birmingham followed; and thence he came to the Olympic, of which Elliston was lessee, and in 1818 made his metropolitan hit as 'Leporello' in *Giovanni in London*, his brother, since

In 1862 a little book of the "Recollections and Wanderings of Paul Bedford" was published. I

dead, playing the part of 'Simpkin.' Accompanying Elliston to Drury Lane in the following year, Mr. Robert Keeley again had the opportunity of showing his humour in this part—though cast for an inferior one—in consequence of Mr. Edward Knight, who was the substitute for Harley, being taken ill, and from that time he dated his real introduction to public notice. Seceding from Drury Lane in 1821, he joined the Adelphi company, where he appeared in a small part called 'Dash,' without attracting, however, much attention. On November 26th of this year, Moncrieff's version of Pierce Egan's *Tom and Jerry* was produced, and Mr. Keeley's acting as 'Jemmy Green' became a great feature in the extravaganza, which ran through two seasons. At the end of the first season Mr. Keeley with Walbourne, so renowned as 'Dusty Bob,' went to Sadler's Wells, and on April 8th, 1822, appeared there as 'Jerry,' in Pierce Egan's own adaptation of the book. The reputation he thus gained procured for him an engagement at Covent Garden, where he made his first appearance October 26th, 1822, as 'Darby,' in *The Poor Soldier*. When the Covent Garden season terminated he was engaged by Mr. Arnold for the English Opera House, appearing as 'Fritz' in R. B. Peake's dramatic romance of *Frankenstein*. In the autumn of 1824, Covent Garden again had his services, and when (October 14th) Weber's *Der Freischutz* was produced, he was the 'Killian;' and at this theatre he remained several successive seasons, hence obtaining the clever partner of his life in Miss Goward, who was included in the same company. After having acquired a great reputation, the popularity of these performers brought offers from the American managers, and in 1837 they paid a flying visit to the States, of which Mr. Keeley afterwards recorded his impressions in an amusing volume. Returning to England, he joined Madame Vestris at the Olympic in 1838, and accompanied her to Covent Garden afterwards, when that theatre

find in it a passing reference to the clockmaker's boy, and an anecdote which it will be interesting to quote in this place, the more so that it contains a tribute to the author's associate at the Adelphi, which it is pleasant to read:—

"When my late friend and associate, Wright, departed, I despaired of ever again meeting one with whom I could so congenially co-operate for the amusement of the public, but I have been most agreeably delighted and surprised by the co-partnery and talent of one of the most versatile and agreeable demonstrators of the comic muse in this or any other country—I allude to J. L.

passed under her management. In 1842 the Keeleys were at the Strand, and the following year were engaged at the Princess's, opening with *Twelfth Night*. In 1844 (April 8th), Mr. Keeley in conjunction with Mr. Strutt, opened the Lyceum and for three seasons maintained its popularity with decided benefit to their purse and the public. In October, 1850, Mr. Keeley undertook, with Mr. Charles Kean, the management of the Princess's, opening with *Twelfth Night*, but the theatre was soon left under the exclusive direction of Mr. Charles Kean. Mr. and Mrs. Keeley then fulfilled an engagement at the Adelphi, and afterwards appeared under the management of Mr. E. T. Smith at Drury Lane. Here Mr. Keeley, in March, 1856, made his last appearance on the stage. Besides his widow, whose histrionic reputation has been equal to that of her late husband, Mr. Robert Keeley has left behind him two daughters to lament his loss. Miss Mary Keeley, it will be remembered, became Mrs. Albert Smith, and Miss Louise Keeley married Mr. Montague Williams, the well-known barrister.

Toole, whose public celebrity is world-renowned, but whose real worth and goodness can only be appreciated by those who have the pleasure of his private society and friendship. This miniature of

MR. J. B. BUCKSTONE.

goodness is ever ready to lend a helping hand to the needy of our craft. For example, on one night last season he played at three separate theatres; first at the Surrey, secondly at the Adelphi, and thirdly at Sadler's Wells. A comic incident occurred in the transit from the Adelphi

to Sadler's Wells. He (Toole) played the 'Clockmaker's Boy' in *Janet Pride*, at the Adelphi, having to finish at Sadler's Wells as 'Old Grinnage' in *The Green Bushes*. Being pressed for time, he changed garments in the cab. Arrived at the theatre, cabby was astonished to see the old man turn out, and said, 'What have you done with the boy? This old gent didn't get in at the Adelphi, what have you done with the young 'un? I ain't easy in my mind about that there lad.' We laughed and told the Jarvey it was all right."

V.

"Paul Bedford used to relate an interesting incident in the early career of the late J. B. Buckstone. He was engaged when quite a boy for utility business at Hastings. Wombwell's show proved an overwhelming counter-attraction to the theatre. Affairs were desperate, when the manager called the company together, discussed the situation, and agreed with him that a strong new play which he had just obtained, and which was a great hit at the Surrey, might retrieve their fortunes. In this piece the boy Buckstone was cast for an unimportant part; but he went out upon the Downs to study it. A gentleman who

was loitering in the locality followed him during the third day of his work and eventually addressed him.

"'You appear to be deeply interested in your book, my young friend; what may it be?'

"The question was asked in a gracious and courteous manner, and Buckstone promptly handed the book to the stranger.

"'Oh, indeed,' said he, 'the new drama they are playing in London! You have evidently a taste for dramatic literature.'

"'I am a member of the company of actors now playing at Hastings,' Buckstone replied.

"'Indeed,' said the stranger, 'I am fond of dramatic works, especially those of Shakspere.'

"'Ah!' said the boy, 'William Shakspere is not a gentleman of my acquaintance yet, but I hope to be on speaking terms with him some day.'

"'I hope you may be,' said the stranger. 'And how are you doing at the theatre? I trust business is good?'

"'No, sir; I am sorry to say it is very bad. There is a wild-beast show in the town, which has emptied the theatre. The truth is, the management is hard up; if the new piece does not draw, I am afraid we shall all be ruined; a friend of mine, Cooper the scene-painter, had saved a five-pound note for a rainy day, kept it in

his watch-case, watch was stolen last night, and affairs are not at all rosy with any of us. But the benefit season is beginning, and that will help us through perhaps.'

"The stranger said he would like to see the theatre, wondered if the boy could show him over the house, felt an interest in players, and so on. The boy piloted him to the theatre, with an eye to patronage for his own benefit. When the stranger had seen the house, and gathered more information about the poor condition of the treasury and the worthy character of the management, he thanked the boy for his courtesy and attention, and was about to take his leave. At that moment a post-chaise drove up to the doors of the theatre, and none other than Mr. Elliston, then manager of Drury Lane, jumped out and effusively took the hand of the stranger, saying, 'My dear friend, I have been looking everywhere for you; you must return to town at once; in your absence business has been ruinous; must announce you for "Richard" on Monday.'

"'I came here with your consent to study my part in the new tragedy,' said the stranger.

"'We must put that off,' said Mr. Robert William Elliston.

"'On one condition,' said the other.

"'Name it,' said Elliston.

"'That you will remain here and play with me to-morrow night for the benefit of our unfortunate brethren.'

"'Agreed,' said Elliston.

"That night it was announced that on the following evening the pieces would be *The Merchant of Venice*—'Shylock' by Edmund Kean ('the Roscius of the world,' as Paul called him) and *The Liar*—'Wildrake,' R. W. Elliston. The result was a house that enabled the management to pay all back salaries, to buy Cooper a new watch and note, and money enough to take the troupe comfortably to the next town of Dover.

"'There!' Paul would invariably add, as he has done in his little book; 'there, dear boy, was a pattern for our smaller tragedians to emulate.'"

VI.

"In January, 1865, Miss Bateman appeared at the Adelphi in *The Hunchback*.

"There was some rivalry of opinion on the part of the audience as to the merits of the two ladies in the piece, Miss Henrietta Sims and the star. Mr. H. L. Bateman, you may be sure, was a tremendous partisan on his daughter's side. The truth is, both actresses were very good. Miss Sims had a more dainty and cultivated art than

Miss Bateman. The latter had made a hit as 'Leah' in an English adaptation of the German play. She had thrilled great audiences with the powerful way in which she cursed the hero of the

MISS KATE BATEMAN.

piece, and had otherwise given a fine impersonation of the persecuted maiden. She was one of 'the Bateman children' whom her father had made famous.[8] Bateman was a great believer in

[8] "Kate Josephine Bateman was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in October, 1842. Both her parents were actors, and

Bateman and the Batemans, and had first-rate qualities. He was very intense in his likes and

she, with her sister, two years younger than herself, appeared in public as the 'Bateman Children' as early as 1851, at the St. James's Theatre. She afterwards prepared herself assiduously for the stage, and in 1859 played successfully in the leading American theatres, her principal characters being those of 'Evangeline,' founded on Longfellow's poem; 'Geraldine,' in a play written for her by her mother; 'Julia,' in *The Hunchback* 'Pauline,' in *The Lady of Lyons;* and 'Juliet' and 'Lady Macbeth.' She arrived in England in the autumn of 1863, and appeared 210 times in the character of the Jewish maiden 'Leah,' in an adaptation of the German play, *Deborah*, at the Adelphi Theatre, October 1st. After a provincial tour, she reappeared at the Adelphi, playing 'Julia' in the *Hunchback*, and other characters. She took a farewell of the English public at Her Majesty's Theatre, in the character of 'Juliet' in *Romeo and Juliet*, December 22nd, 1865, and was married to Mr. George Crowe in October, 1866. Mrs. Crowe returned to the stage in 1868, retaining her stage name of Kate Bateman. In 1868 Miss Bateman played the part of Mary Warner,' in the play of that name written for her by the late Tom Taylor, at the Haymarket Theatre, supported by Messrs. Howe, Kendal, Compton, Rogers, &c. She has made the character of 'Leah' peculiarly her own. In 1872, and subsequently, she appeared with great success in London as 'Medea,' in the play of that name. In 1875, on a revival of *Macbeth* at the Lyceum (Mr. Irving as 'Macbeth'), she played the part of 'Lady Macbeth.' She also sustained the title *rôle* in Mr. Tennyson's *Queen Mary*, which was produced at the same house in April, 1876. Miss Bateman appeared on the first night of the reopening of Sadler's Wells under the management of Mrs. Bateman, in *Rob Roy*, as 'Helen MacGregor,' and spoke the opening address on that occasion, written by the late Tom Taylor. Miss Bateman subsequently

dislikes, a good friend, a bitter enemy. I played 'Fathom' in this revival of *The Hunchback*. In the summer of the same year, *Through Fire and Water*, by Walter Gordon, was produced, in which I played the character of 'Joe Bright.'[9]

produced at Sadler's Wells the play of *His Wife*, by Henry Arthur Jones, in which she played her original part of 'Margaret Field.'"—"Men of the Time."

[9] "Although the majority of characters to which Mr. J. L. Toole devotes his talents belong to the region of broad farce, and for the most part only derive their reality from the special ability of the actor to delineate individual peculiarity, he generally strikes into another line whenever he would make an impression of more than ordinary strength, as if convinced that his proper vocation was to follow the late Mr. F. R. Robson in semi-pathetic illustrations of plebian life. . . . The action takes place in a stratum of society which is respectable, though humble, the groupings are simple, and the personages are all more or less of marked character, and are all more or less important, the principal figure in whom the interest of the piece culminates being more strongly marked than the rest, and so conceived as to command by turns the laughter and compassion of the audience, and to exhibit the most violently contrasted emotions. This figure is 'Joe Bright,' a fireman, who is of course represented by Mr. J. L. Toole. He is a thoroughly honest fellow, who achieves infinite honour, and wins innumerable medals by a gallant discharge of his perilous duties, and is, withal, so modest, that he cannot bear to hear himself even slightly praised. . . . All the parts are good and all are well acted. That Mr. J. L. Toole, as 'Joe Bright,' would represent to perfection the honest plebeian, good at heart, and thick of head, might easily be foreseen; but there is novelty in the drunken outburst that brings the first act to a close. Droll inebriety is common enough upon the stage, and Mr. B. Webster in *Janet Pride* gives an admirable picture of

It is a part of the serio-comic order—a fireman, an honest, worthy, humble chap—and there is in it a good opportunity for acting; when distressed in his mind the poor fellow takes some spirits and becomes savagely drunk. A good fellow sober, Joe becomes a demon drunk. The audience, I remember, were very enthusiastic at this point of the play, and the critics next morning had very favourable notices of the actor. In May, 1866, I played 'Prudent' in *The Fast Family*, adapted from Sardou's *La Famille Benoiton*, and I think that ends what may be called my record of the Adelphi, so far as original pieces go. Of course I played many other parts, and for the first time, in revivals of Adelphi drama. But without going into tedious details, we have covered the ground;

the habitual drunkenness by which a man endeavours to silence the voice of an evil conscience. But the effects of ardent spirits imbibed by a man who is already distressed in mind, and is suddenly converted from a comparatively rational being into an ungovernable savage, ready to commit any deed of violence, has been seldom if ever represented, and Mr. Toole has never more forcibly displayed his faculty for profitable observation than in his terrific exhibition of this peculiar phase of human frailty. 'Honnor Bright,' Joe's hard-headed, good-hearted, and somewhat grimly coquettish sister, not highly educated, but deeply convinced of the superiority of mind to brute force, is a capitally-drawn character, capitally played by Mrs. Mellon, to whom Miss H. Sims, as the more gentle 'Ruth,' is an agreeable contrast."—*Times*, July 8th, 1868.

and the next landmark in my career is at the Queen's with *Dearer than Life*, in 1866."

"Before we emigrate to the Queen's," I said, "we will glance back again at your personal and anecdotical reminiscences of the Adelphi."

"Yes, and we will begin with—"

"A new chapter," I said.

# VII.

## BEHIND THE SCENES AND BETWEEN THE ACTS.

The humours of Bob Romer—Jimmy Rogers discovers the recluse—The disabilities of shopkeeping—Bob and the blackbird—T. P. Cook—"The Caged Lion"—Two views of Brighton—Buckstone and the bill-sticker—Toole as an imitator—Keeley at Bow Street—Reading a play—Gommersal and the nuts—Actors and authors—Old G—— discomfited—A dramatic college *fête*—Toole and the conjuror—An amusing reminiscence of Leamington.

### I.

"Bob Romer was a minor member of the Adelphi company. His name is not known much outside theatrical society; but he was a droll fellow. He had many peculiarities. Being poor is perhaps hardly a peculiarity; but with Romer's poverty there was the pride that apes humility, and at the same time the frankness and *bonhomie* of an out-and-out Bohemian who was not ashamed of confessing to the shifts he had been put to in making both ends meet. He hardly believed himself that he was a good actor; but he was uncon-

sciously humorous both off the stage and on, always cheery, and with a full appreciation of gifts in others which he did not possess himself. He had a peculiar mannerism both on and off the stage. He spoke in a gurgling kind of way, with jerks and pauses, like pouring liquor from a bottle. He had a professional air of somewhat seedy gentility—nothing of the crushed tragedian about him, and yet he had not exactly the appearance of the light and gay comedian. When I was a boy and loved theatres above everything, I knew Bob Romer by sight, had had him pointed out to me, and I remember watching him while he looked into a Strand shop-window and when he walked away, saying, by way of a private salutation as it were, 'Bob Romer.' He was one of those innocent kind of fellows who do not know when they are being chaffed, or if they are conscious of it, are willing to share in the fun themselves. Bob once played 'Othello' for a benefit, and in his famous address to the Senate a number of his friends had a box and made curious rejoinders to his confessions, such, for instance, as when he said,—

"'That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter
It is most true,'

they remarked 'Oh, Bob!' and when he added—

"'True I have married her,'

they exclaimed cheerfully, 'Ah well! that's all right, Bob.' At the line—

"'Rude am I in speech,'

they said, "No, Bob, not at all; you do yourself an injustice," and so on; and the memorable per-

MR. JAMES ("JIMMY") ROGERS.

formance being over, Bob was as merry as the rest at the supper which celebrated it.

"He would never tell anybody where he lived, 'because,' he said in his flowery and dramatic way, 'I do not like people to think me otherwise than of noble birth, and I would prefer them to

imagine me in aristocratic quarters—in Grosvenor Square say, rather than the purlieus of Islington.' At last, James Rogers, familiarly known as 'Jimmy,' found him out; I forget at the moment where, but the street was gloomy and unpretentious. Looking down an area, Jimmy espied Mr. Robert Romer, in an apron, near an area window, cleaning knives on a knifeboard. Rogers knocked at the door; was admitted; discovered his friend, and exclaimed, 'At last, Master Bob, I have found you out!' Romer took it in very good part, struck a melodramatic attitude, knife in one hand, board in the other, and exclaimed, 'Ah—this pang at least—might have been—spared me!' There was some handy refreshment in a cupboard, and the two friends celebrated the occasion with characteristic geniality. Romer, I believe, swore Rogers to eternal secrecy upon the carving-knife he had just cleaned; and Rogers as promptly told us the story at the theatre the next evening, no one joining more heartily in the merriment it inspired than Bob Romer himself.

"He was not always engaged at the theatre. He had vacations—not in the country, but on his own resources in town. I met him one day during one of these intervals between wealth and poverty. I asked after his health and his worldly prospects. 'Oh, dear boy,' he said, 'I'm always unlucky—

born to it, I suppose—opened a sweet-stuff shop, up a court not far from the Strand—result most disastrous—the flies had the best of it—only one customer during the short time I stuck to it—a confiding youth who wanted to buy a farthing cane. I didn't keep farthing canes—had to refer him to a rival tradesman—enough to break a fellow's heart. But such is life, dear boy—such is life!' [1]

"Bob kept a blackbird in his dressing-room at the theatre, and was in the habit of feeding it with little tit-bits of meat from the butcher's. He would begin early in the week with six pennyworth; then it would get down to threepence, and occasionally, when he was rather hard up, he would share these tit-bits with the blackbird, cooking them himself on his little fire. He was not extravagant, and his salary was not princely. Occasionally he would be rather short at the end of the week. The butcher was a great admirer of his. Bob had a

[1] Mr. William Tinsley, a friend of the late Bob Romer, writes to say that one of the incidents of the sweet-stuff shop was used by Brough and Halliday in a farce in which Bob was an actor. Bob sold penny kites as well as sweets. The kites were hung from the ceiling at the back of the shop. Bob had to get up a ladder to them. Boys came in to buy penny kites, and while he was up the ladder they plundered his sweets. This incident was adapted in an Adelphi farce and was very funnily treated.

genial, pleasant way with him, and had many humble friends. 'One pennyworth of tit-bits,' said Bob to the messenger at the end of the week; 'only one pennyworth—for the blackbird.' It was

MRS. BANCROFT.

always 'for the blackbird.' It saved his pride, poor old chap, and he had a certain amount of that commodity. The butchers used to call these bits of meat 'block ornaments;' they were in the habit of selling them, after the day's business was over,

to poor people. These little incidents of Bob's pride and eccentricity used frequently to come under my notice. I always thought there was something rather pathetic in his dealings with the butcher and the blackbird.[2]

[2] Mrs. Bancroft, in her share of the double narrative of "Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft on and off the Stage," tells the following capital story of Bob Romer:—"I remember an amusing scene occurring one morning as I arrived at the stage-door to attend a rehearsal, when I heard Bob questioning the hall-porter with a mysterious and puzzled expression on his face. First of all I must explain that on the previous day a little dinner had been given to him by a few friends in the company who desired to have a good joke at poor Bob's expense, and to have one or two speeches about his untried talents, and to sympathize with his failure in ever getting a good part. The poor fellow rose to reply, and after a lengthy speech, which I believe caused much suppressed but undetected laughter, he ended by saying, 'A—I feel much touched by—your—a—sympathy; and with regard to my—a—hidden ability—a—light under a bushel—I may say—if I am not important, I am at least—a—pleasing.'

"This miniature banquet was kept up until ten o'clock, for Bob had not to appear on the stage before eleven, just to act one of his celebrated 'next-to-nothing' parts. He had partaken rather freely of the wine and was somewhat unsteady. When he awoke on the following morning, he had a vague recollection of the dinner; but, for the life of him, could not remember anything that happened afterwards, and his anxiety to find out how things went off at the theatre was very great. When I arrived at the stage-door, a conversation to this effect was going on between Bob and the hall-porter:—

"Bob: 'A—good house—last night, Richardson?'

"Porter: 'Yes, sir, very good house.'

"Bob: 'A—nothing—went wrong at all?'

Warned by the *Daily News* that no reminiscences of Mr. Toole will be complete unless full justice is done to Mr. Robert Romer, concerning whom many of the anecdotes extant are among Mr. Toole's stock stories, I venture to annex part of a chapter of the "Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian," an anonymous volume, but the work of Dr. Strauss, one of the early members of the Savage Club. "Bob Romer," says the learned doctor, "was a devoted student of some of the more abstruse sciences. I met him one day skipping along in rather juvenile fashion, 'Hallo, Bob!' I cried to him; 'what's the matter with you, my young friend? Why, you trip it as lightly and nimbly as Mercury.' Bob stopped short, gave me a look of unfathomable meaning, then said, slowly and impressively:

"PORTER: 'Nothing, sir.'

"BOB: 'A—how did the farce go?'

"PORTER: 'Not so well as usual, I was told, sir.'

"BOB (quickly): 'Not so well, how's that?'

"PORTER: 'I did hear, sir, that it were 'issed.'

"BOB: 'Bless my soul! Was Mr.—a—Webster in the theatre?'

"PORTER: 'He had gone 'ome, sir.'

"BOB (breathing more easily): 'Is he here this morning?'

"PORTER: 'Yes, sir, just arrived.'

"BOB: 'A—did he—ask for me?'

"PORTER: 'No, sir.'

"BOB (after cautiously looking round): 'About last night—a—was I here?'"

'Mercury! hem! water boils at the poles there—where here, on our earth, it freezes. Singular! isn't it?' And, with another deep look, he left me to ponder upon the curious problem of such a most remarkable difference between these two distinguished members of the solar system.

"On another occasion Halliday and myself happened to stumble upon Bob when he was most attentively watching the working of a chocolate-making machine in Holborn. When he became aware of our presence, he slowly turned to us, and, pointing his finger to the revolving crusher, exclaimed in a portentous voice, the single word, 'centrifugal,' then went on his way, apparently lost, like Chrononhotonthologos, in a 'cogibundity of cogitation.'

"I met Bob one day in Maiden Lane. It was after the death of Miss Romer, who had left him in her will, if not exactly a thumping legacy, perhaps, still something comparatively handsome. The lucky legatee had just received a letter from France, which he asked me to translate for him. It was from a theatrical biographist, asking for particulars of the deceased artist's career, as he intended to bring out a sketch of her life in his publication. Mr. Robert Romer was enchanted. He disparagingly compared the brief lukewarm obituaries that had appeared in some English

papers with what this French gentleman professed himself willing, nay, eager to do. There was a rider to the letter, intimating that it was always customary for the surviving relatives of any subject of a biographic sketch to subscribe five hundred copies for private circulation among friends, &c., and requesting that the sum of two hundred and fifty francs (10*l.* English money) should be forwarded to the office of the publication, together with particulars of life, &c.

"I slyly glanced at Bob whilst reading this out to him, and I saw how his face changed; for a mild man, as he unquestionably was, he looked absolutely fierce.

"'Cursed French idiot!—swindler!' he cried in angry tones; 'does he take me for a fool? Don't want his trash. Knows nothing of late Miss Romer, I'll be bound. Trade upon the dead! dirty! Ten pounds, indeed! Not a blessed farthing!" And snatching the letter from my hand, he furiously tore it into bits, and danced upon the pieces, to the intense amazement of George Honey, who was casually passing by, but had to stop to listen to the indignant Adelphian's fierce objurgations and charges against the unlucky Frenchman, who had conceived the atrocious design of getting money out of him."

II.

"I CALLED with Paul Bedford on T. P. Cooke at Torrington Square. It was after Cooke had retired from the stage. Paul wanted him to play for his benefit. He made the proposition rather gingerly, after a little prologue, in which he made himself as agreeable as possible to Mrs. Cooke.

"'Well, well, my dear Tippy'—we always called Cooke 'Tippy'—'will you play for my benefit?'

"'Pray, don't ask him,' said Mrs. Cooke.

"'I was to have played at the Lyceum,' said Tippy, 'and taken a farewell, but they cast me for a Greenwich pensioner.[3] I couldn't play it, you know. *It was an old man.*'

"'Of course not,' said Mrs. Cooke; 'he couldn't play an old man; it is not in his line.'

"When we were leaving the house I said to Bedford, 'That was rather funny, Paul—couldn't play an old man.'

"'Not a bit, father,' said Paul, 'of course he couldn't; you might as well ask *me* to play old men.'

"Very amusing. Paul was no chicken; and Cooke—well, Cooke *was* an old man.

[3] In a new piece, written by Craven, with a view to Cooke, and called *One Tree Hill*.

"Cooke was a remarkable actor; he had no equal in *The Pilot*, and he was the original 'William' in *Black-eyed Susan*. As a pantomimist, his agile and grotesque powers were seen to great advantage when he played 'The Monster' in *Frankenstein*. He had a curious tremor in his voice, and one night, when, as 'William,' he was speaking of the 'Lord High Admiral,' somebody called out, 'Don't cry, Mr. Cooke,' to which he responded, '*I'm not crying, my lad.*'"

III.

"Tom Stewart was a famous old actor, and well-known at the Adelphi. We used to call him the caged lion, he considered himself so cramped by ordinary melodrama; he always wanted to let out, had no opportunities for his genius, such as he had been accustomed to in the provinces, where he had played 'Richard,' 'Macbeth,' 'Hamlet,' and the heroes of tragedy generally. He was a pompous, but kindly fellow, gloomily serious; and Paul and I, who were mostly occupied in cheerier walks of life, real and assumed, could not resist opportunities of playing off little practical jokes upon him. He often boasted of his triumphs at Bath and other leading provincial theatres, and of his distinguished country friends.

"One day, amongst my cards, I found one belonging to a gentleman I did not know, Captain H. Smedley. I wrote on the back, in an assumed hand:—'Dear Tom,—Come and lunch with me to-morrow at two o'clock, for auld lang syne.' In the evening Tom said, 'Now, here's an absurd thing; here's some old friend of mine, Captain H. Smedley, called upon me, left his card, invited me to lunch, and gives me no address: very extraordinary!' We both said it was; but suggested that he would probably hear from him again.

"In the evening, sure enough, came a note—'In haste.—Dear Tom,—Sorry you didn't come. Will you make it dinner at eight?' Tom, again in a fume, said, 'These country fellows are so thoughtless. I have no doubt this is some dear old friend of mine from Bath; and yet, here's an absurd thing, invites me to dine at eight, the very time I am on the stage.'

"We asked him a good many questions about his Bath friends. He said he didn't quite remember Smedley, but he had so many friends, particularly military officers, that he might be excused for forgetting their names.

"The next day we sent him a note, in which Captain Smedley apologized for not remembering how difficult it would be for him to dine at eight,

but telling him he would be in a box that night with some ladies, and would come round afterwards, if he might, and take him to Long's, and they would have some supper and a good chat.

"That night, to our great amazement, we noticed that Tom Stewart had picked out a box where there was a gentleman and two ladies, and to which box he played with great assiduity, kissing his hand at the wing as the curtain went down. We were glad that this conduct was not resented by the gentleman on behalf of his lady companions. Nobody came round to see Mr. Stewart; we had almost expected the stranger to do so—in America he would have waltzed round with a six-shooter, as our cousins would put it. Stewart waited a little time: we waited with him; and finally took him home ourselves to supper.

"The matter always remained a mystery with him, as did many other similar little jokes that were very amusing to us; more particularly when we drew him out upon them, and induced him to boast a little, as we did one evening in a miscellaneous little company in regard to a presentation made to him at Bath. Having got him to describe the value of it, Paul Bedford, with his preliminary whistle, which I daresay you will remember, said,

'And you sent it to your uncle, Tom, the next day?'

"'I did nothing of the kind, sir,' said Tom, with much offended dignity, 'and I will no longer waste my time in a company which I had mistaken for a company of gentlemen.'

"Stewart was a friend of Mr. Edwin James when that remarkable person was Recorder of Brighton. James tried to get Stewart the appointment of Inspector of Weights and Measures there. While the Recorder's efforts were active Stewart was continually running down to Brighton. 'The healthiest place in England,' he would say, 'sea always there, no dreary low-water business, a bright genial city by the ocean, sir!' When the Inspectorship was decided against his candidature, he dropped Brighton, wouldn't even speak of it for months, but one day, asked if he were going down to Brighton for a holiday, he let out—'Brighton, no, sir; no place for a Christian man—treeless land—shingly shore—shipless sea!'"

V.

"One night, Fechter, Sothern, myself and Buckstone, were leaving the Haymarket Theatre some little time after the performance was over

when suddenly Buckstone discovered a bill-sticker posting an election-placard right upon the front of that sacred house of comedy.

"'How dare you, sir!' he said in his peculiar guttural and jerky manner, 'how dare you post bills upon my theatre?'

"The man paid no attention, but went on

MR. BUCKSTONE AND THE BILL-STICKER.

lathering the placard, which he put up with an air of quiet defiance.

"'You miserable bill-sticker!' said Buckstone,

his mannerism coming out very pointedly with his temper, 'if you don't desist, you scoundrel, I'll have you locked up.'

"Whereupon the man, quietly making a closing dab at the poster, said, 'I'll have *you* locked up, you impostor, if you don't mind, for givin' such a bad imitation of Buckstone—could do it better myself.'

"Keeley and Buckstone belonged to a little society called the Kaffirs. When they came out of the club one night rather late it was very cold Buckstone, who had a great regard for Keeley said, 'You'd better wrap yourself up, Bob; it's jolly cold!'

"'Oh, it'll be jolly hot—at Brompton—when I get home,' replied Bob, with his familiar chuckle.

"Keeley had a peculiar way of kicking out his leg behind in comedy, and also in real life; used to use many expletives. One day, at rehearsal, he was suddenly missed. Something or somebody had annoyed him very much. Byron found him at the back of the pit, kicking out his leg, and quietly remarking to himself, 'Hell-cat!'"

V.

"Charles Dillon came to my house to read a

new piece; it was a *A Life's Ransom*, by Dr. Westland Marston. He brought with him a rather famous actor in his way, Gomersal, once the hero of the Surrey in *Mazeppa*, and such like pieces; he was the Napoleon in the spectacular drama of *The Fall of Moscow*, at Astley's, and he is immortalized by the pen of 'Bon Gaultier' (Sir

LADY THEODORE MARTIN (MISS HELEN FAUCIT).

Theodore Martin) and the pencil of Alfred Crowquill, in 'The Book of Ballads.'[4] Here's the book

[4] Two correspondents, one of them a scholar, send me kindly corrections in regard to this delightful travestie. The former informs me that the *nom de plume* "Bon Gaultier" belonged jointly to Sir Theodore Martin and Professor

and here's 'The Midnight Visit.' I don't know anything finer than the mock heroics of Sir Theodore Martin; and I remember his wife, Miss Helen Faucit, when she was certainly the most charming 'Lady of Lyons' you could possibly imagine. Let us read 'The Midnight Visit,' which is in honour of our friend Gomersal:—

It was the Lord of Castlereagh, he sat within his room,
His arms were crossed upon his breast, his face was marked with gloom;
They said that St. Helena's Isle had rendered up its charge,
That France was bristling up in arms—the Emperor at large.

Twas midnight! all the lamps were dim, and dull as death the street,
It might be that the watchman slept that night upon his beat;
When lo! a heavy foot was heard to creak upon the stair,
The door revolved upon its hinge—Great Heaven! What enters there?

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Aytoun. The latter says "The Book of Ballads," which I quote, was by Aytoun and not by Martin. The truth is, according to "Men of the Time," that Sir Theodore Martin "first became known as an author by his contributions to *Fraser's Magazine* and *Tait's Magazine*, under the signature of 'Bon Gaultier,' and in conjunction with the late Professor Aytoun he composed 'The Book of Ballads,' which bears that pseudonym, and a volume of translations of 'The Poems and Ballads of Goethe.'"

A little man, of stately mien, with slow and solemn stride ;
His hands are crossed upon his back, his coat is opened wide ;
And on his vest of green he wears an eagle and a star—
Saint George, protect us ! 'tis The Man, the thunderbolt of war.

Is that the famous hat that waved along Marengo's ridge ?
Are those the spurs of Austerlitz, the boots of Lodi's bridge ?
Leads he the conscript swarm again from France's hornet hive ?
What seeks the fell usurper here, in Britain, and alive ?

Pale grew the Lord of Castlereagh, his tongue was parched and dry,
And in his brain he felt the glare of that tremendous eye ;
What wonder that he shrunk in fear, for who could meet the glance
Of him who reared, 'mid Russian snows, the gonfalon of France ?

From the side-pocket of his vest a pinch the despot took,
Yet not a whit did he relax the sternness of his look.
" Thou thought'st the lion was afar, but he has burst the chain—
The watchword for to-night is 'France,' the answer 'St. Helène.'

" And did'st thou deem the barren isles, or ocean's waves could bind
The master of the universe—the monarch of mankind ?
I tell thee, fool, the world itself is all too small for me,
I laugh to scorn thy bolts and bars—I burst them and am free.

"Thou think'st that England hates me! Mark! This very night my name
Was thundered in its capital with tumult and acclaim.
They saw me, knew me, owned my power—Proud Lord, I say, beware,
There's men within the Surrey side, who know to do and dare!

"To-morrow, in thy very teeth, my standard will I rear—
Ay, well that ashen cheek of thine may blanch and pale with fear;
To-morrow night another town shall sink in ghastly flames;
And as I crossed the Borodin, so shall I cross the Thames!

"Thou'lt seize me, wilt thou, ere the dawn? Weak lordling, do thy worst!
These hands ere now have broke thy chains, thy fetters they have burst.
Yet, would'st thou know my resting-place? Behold, 'tis written there!
And let thy coward myrmidons approach me if they dare!"

Another pinch, another stride—he passes through the door—
"Was it a phantom or a man was standing on the floor?
And could that be the Emperor that moved before my eyes?
Ah, yes, too sure it was himself, for here the paper lies."

With trembling hands, Lord Castlereagh undid the mystic scroll,
With glassy eye essayed to read, for fear was on his soul—
"What's here? At Astley's, every night, the play of Moscow's FALL!
NAPOLEON, for the thousandth time, by Mr. GOMERSAL!"

"You were speaking of Robson and Keeley,"

said my host, forgetting Dillon and Gomersal for the moment. "They both played 'Jerry' in *The Thumping Legacy*. It is a cockney who goes to Corsica; and the other man says, 'What

MR. ROBERT KEELEY.

do you here? I will tell you. It is now four hundred years since.' Keeley used to say to him in a very quiet way, 'Don't you think we had better take a chair?' Robson was all ex-

citement, and in tragic tones exclaimed: 'Don't you think we had better be seated?' Keeley was a peculiar little fellow; very short, bald head, comical face; spoke in a serious kind of tone. Very little chap. When he appeared as a witness at Bow Street, there was a seat in the witness-box. They thought he was sitting down. The magistrate said, 'Please to stand up, Mr. Keeley.' 'I *am* standing up,' said Keeley, in his melancholy manner."

VI.

Mr. Toole has not the intense tragic moments of Robson, but he has an earnestness of tone and manner which exaggerated in the direction of burlesque, indicates that underlying power of pathos which comes out in such parts as "Michael Garner," "Joe Bright," and "Caleb Plummer." Robson had marvellous moments which suggested tragic gifts of the very highest order; but they were only moments; they were sudden efforts which he could not have maintained, and which in burlesque were tremendous surprises. Toole is a remarkable mimic. He read the first verses of "The Midnight Visit" in the manner of Fechter, and the imitation was as real as the closing lines which he gave in the curious style of Buckstone.

His imitations of Keeley are more or less pathetic. They have in them pleasant reminiscences and a loving regard for the dead actor's memory. There is a kindred example of personal admiration in his imitations of Sims Reeves, in regard to which a well-known musical critic said to me the other day, "His singing of Tom Bowling when first I heard it was a revelation to me. It is not burlesque, it is an illustration of Reeves's method, an exact reminiscence, by a man of feeling, more especially excellent considering that it is an imitation by one who does not profess to have any vocal powers." Toole has told me that when he is riding in cabs or travelling by train he often beguiles the time by humming Reeves's songs, and that the tenderness of them, and his recollections of the delight they have given him when sung by the master, have been a solace to him in his worst hours of depression.

## VII.

"But you were speaking about Dillon reading to you *A Life's Ransom*," I suggested.

"Yes. Gomersal came as Dillon's friend. He had his pocket full of nuts, and he cracked them quietly all the night. Dillon looked round every now and then to see where the noise came

from, and then Gomersal cracked more carefully. He seemed to have but one object—and that was not *A Life's Ransom*.

"At last Dillon discovered him.

"'Who the deuce is that cracking nuts?—Why it's you, Gomersal!'

"'Very sorry: beg pardon,' said Gomersal, 'I just cracked one to keep myself awake.'

"Dillon was very angry, as well he might be. *A Life's Ransom* was a very good piece; but it was not the sort of play that interested the Napoleonic hero.

"I once tried cracking nuts on a dramatist myself. But I had provocation. I didn't like the play; the dramatist didn't like the nuts. I suppose it is very hard lines when an author has written a play, comes and reads it to you, and you yawn over it, or go to sleep, or crack nuts. At the same time it is rather hard upon an actor to be read to and hammered at by an author whose work is of no earthly use to him—a good play, but not good for him.

"And this reminds me of several stories about playwrights. Old G——, before he was old, by the way, insisted on reading me a piece. He was always more or less of a bore; I don't say it disparagingly you know; but he was an awful bore for all that; he couldn't help it, poor chap; he

didn't know he was a bore. He came to my house. He sat in an armchair near the fire, as close to me as he could conveniently get. I don't know if you've ever noticed it, but bores always do that kind of thing; they allow you no margin —give you no room for escape.

"It was a dull play. To begin with, it was utterly outside my line; a strong blood-and-thunder melodrama, the interest all confined to the hero or the villain, instead of being all in the hands of the low comedian. I was very tired; tried to keep awake, but had every now and then forty decided winks.

"'You are not attending,' he said.

"'Oh, yes, I am,' I replied, 'I can always listen best with my eyes shut—don't get distracted looking at things.'

"'Where was I, then?' he would say, which puzzled me, but I tried to remember sufficient of the plot to encourage him to continue.

"'No, my dear Toole, you are *not* paying attention,' he said by-and-by, with special emphasis.

"'Yes, I am,' I said. 'I know exactly where you were.'

"'Where?'

"'At the end of the third act, where the villain and the hero meet face to face, and the heroine is—'

"'Nothing of the kind,' he said, 'that is the third scene of the second act. I read that half an hour ago.'

"I stammered an apology, however; said he must excuse me; I was rather tired, and it was not necessary for me to hear every word to judge of the merits of the piece, so far as I was concerned. And being utterly worn out a few minutes later, he had come so near me to keep me awake, I fell forward into his lap fast asleep.

"He bore it with as much patience as he could command, and, rolling up his manuscript, said he would come and see me another time. In spite of my invitation to go on to the end, he took a hurried farewell; and I believe that melodrama was never produced."

VIII.

"THERE was a man about town, a good sort of fellow, I believe, a Colonel Addison. He wrote a farce for Wright, called *Abraham Parker*, and another, farce called *The Gorilla*. I and Paul Bedford played the latter. We had to gag it about a good deal. But Addison had no false pride in regard to the piece. 'I am delighted with it,' he said to me; 'didn't hear a line of my own. Not one of those kind of authors who insist

upon every word of their text being spoken. Come and lunch, Number So-and-so, Argyle Street. We'll have a chat.'

"He was so pleasant about our little gags that I accepted his invitation; got there as good fortune would have it at a quarter to two.

"The Colonel was out. His son, a precocious little fellow, who received me, said, 'Pa will be in almost directly, Mr. Toole.'

"'Thank you,' I replied. 'You are a fine little fellow; are you going to lunch with Pa?'

"'No,' he said, going to a drawer and taking out a manuscript, 'Pa is going to read this and four or five more plays to you!'

"'Is he!' I exclaimed. 'That's very kind of him. Let me see it.' It was a very formidable manuscript although it professed to be a farce. 'Will you tell Pa,' I said, taking up my hat and patting the precocious little fellow's head, 'that I am sorry I can't stay and have luncheon with him to-day, but I will write to him. Of course, little boys must never tell stories under any circumstances; if Pa asks you if you showed me that manuscript, you must say yes, but if he does not, you need not mention it; he might be angry.'

"He looked me up often, however, after this. He was a friend of Knowles, of Manchester, nice fellow; but, oh, that *Gorilla!*"

IX.

'At the Crystal Palace Dramatic College *fête*, Paul Bedford, myself, and Billington had a show. There were a lot of other shows about. One, adjoining us, was a conjuror's; a professional conjuror, not an amateur showman, as we were—a very pompous gentleman with greasy hair, and posing very much about very trifling bits of sleight-of-hand. We made a little hole through our booth, communicating with his. We occasionally suffered from *ennui* and heat, our entertainment being more or less monotonous—the exhibition of Paul Bedford as Chang, the giant, and C. J. Smith as his wife, Lady Chang, and some other nonsense; and, in the intervals, we worried our neighbour, more particularly with his trick of the vanishing orange. When it disappeared, and he triumphantly asked, 'Where is it now?' we quietly remarked, through our convenient aperture—'Up your sleeve.'

"He bore it for a little while, but presently requested silence. 'I must really not be interrupted,' he said. 'I have performed before all the crowned heads of Europe, and my efforts in the art of legerdemain have always been accepted with gracious favour.'

"On this we shouted, 'Hear, hear!' and the audience applauded. But in due course when the orange trick, or the vanishing half-penny, or the pigeons, or the wonderful paper which came out of his mouth in the shape of a barber's pole and was then consumed in a bundle of flax without injury to his sacred person, was being demonstrated, we dropped in exasperating suggestions that we could see how he did it, that it wasn't a barber's pole at all, that he had the pigeons in his pocket, that his box had a false bottom to it, and so on; until at last, in sheer despair, he exclaimed that he had never been so grossly insulted in his life; he had travelled all over the world, and had even performed before savages, but never had he been so shamefully treated.

"He was a very excitable fellow, and seeing him so disturbed, we gradually dropped him. We heard from him later, when, after investigation, he suspected the conspirators. But we explained to him that he couldn't expect anybody to be serious at a dramatic *fête*, and furthermore, that we rather envied his ability.

"Paul Bedford used to gurgle over a story of the Sheffield or Yorkshire dialect, which reminds me of one I told Dickens that greatly amused him. Paul was on a coach, crossing a ridge of hill not far from Sheffield, known as 'Froggatt's Edge.' A

man lost his hat. The passengers cried out, 'T'at's on t'edge t'at's on t'edge!' Paul Bedford said, 'Take me back to London.' My story is a trifle more elaborate, but none the less true. I recall the scene to-day, chiefly remembering its effect on Dickens.

"They are playing *The Lady of Lyons* and *The Bleeding Nun* at the Theatre Royal, Sheffield. Two boys are discussing the performance outside.

"First Boy: 'Has't been to play?'

"Second Boy: 'Aye.'

"First Boy: 'Wot were't play?'

"Second Boy: 'T' Lady a Lyons.'

"First Boy: 'Wot were't Lady a Lyons up to?"

"Second Boy: 'Up to nowt; ah cum oot t'end a t'act, couldn't mek oot wot t'were aboot moren t'man in t'moon.'

"First Boy: 'Wot were't t'other play?'

"Second Boy: 'T' Bleedin' Nun.'

"First Boy: 'Wot were t' Bleedin' Nun up to?'

"Second Boy: 'T' Bleedin' Nun were up to nowt, ah come oot 'fore it was ovver; couldn't mek oot wot t'were aboot moren t'man in t'moon.'

"'They must have had a pleasant evening,' Dickens remarked.

"Since it is so difficult for a Londoner to understand them, I often wonder how it is they understand us so well as they appear to do."

X.

"DURING an engagement of twelve nights with Paul Bedford at Edinburgh, Mr. Wyndham, the manager, asked me if I would play at the Lord Provost's in an entertainment given to Prince Alfred, who was the Lord Provost's guest.

"'Not for a fee,' I said, and I have always acted upon this principle. 'As the Lord Provost's guest, I will be most happy to assist in amusing the Prince and his friends.'

"In due course I received an invitation, and I remember the occasion as a very pleasant evening. *The Wonderful Woman* was the chief attraction. I played 'Crepon, the cobbler.'

"The old Duke of Buccleuch was amongst the guests. I didn't know who he was. He made himself very agreeable to me, and I only became acquainted with him as a duke late in the evening. I don't say that he didn't look like a duke; but I have known men of very inferior position who assumed a great deal more. 'Come to my cottage,' he said, 'at Dalkeith.' He was rather like Compton in appearance: had a smack

of his dry humour. 'I once played myself,' he said, 'and rather liked it; I played "Destifina."'"

XI.

"Not long since, at Leamington, a gentleman who shall be nameless—he mightn't like to see this incident in print, and I wouldn't give him pain for the world—called upon me (he was an Adelphi playgoer in my early days); he met me on the stairs as I was going out. I knew him slightly.

"'Well, I'm so glad to see you,' he said, seizing my hand: 'not able to come last night, or certainly should have done so. Haven't called upon you about *that piece*—don't be afraid! Just wanted to shake hands. . . . You're looking well. Good house last night? . . . Of course, that goes without saying. . . . But I thought you'd like to know in regard to *that piece*, which, after reading, you said was not in your way, that I have submitted it to Compton, who, shaking me warmly by the hand, said, "My dear captain, there's something in it."'

"The piece he referred to was something he had sent to me quite twenty years before this conversation. Good or bad, I had forgotten it

until that moment, and he had evidently thought I did not care for it; but he spoke about the piece as if I had read it only the previous day, and during the whole of our conversation, although he kept informing me that he had not come to speak about *that piece*, he spoke of nothing else.

"I said Compton was a fine actor. 'Yes,' he said, 'and he believed in *that piece*.' I trailed other great names before him; mentioned Webster and Wright, since he would talk of actors and acting; but for three-quarters of an hour he continually dragged me back to '*that piece*.'

"'A friend of mine,' he went on presently, 'who read that piece only a week ago, said it ought not to be lost.'

"'Have you lost it?' I inquired innocently.

"'Oh, no. Of course not,' he said, 'I mean ought not to be lost to the public.'

"'Oh, I see,' I said. 'Quite so.'

"'Excuse me a moment—I'll give you an idea of the plot; I'm quite sure you've forgotten it. If not you will remember that the first act opens with an old man, who has got a niece."

"'How is she?' I said, in sheer despair.

"'How is who?'

"'Your niece.'

"'Not *my* niece! She's in the plot. It's the play I'm talking about.'

"'Oh!' I said, 'I thought you were talking about your family.'

"'Oh, no,' he said. 'Now, look here, Mr. Toole, I don't want to bother you about *that piece*, but the plot is most original. Compton says it is; and my friends all think so.'

"'And they think it ought not to be lost.'

"'They do; and I am determined it shall not,' he said. 'I have got it in my pocket. The *dénouement* of the first act, if you remember, brings the heroine to the edge of a precipice, where she is seized and thrown over by the villain.'

"'Oh, that's a pity,' I said, 'because that will end the play, if you lose your heroine in the first act.'

"'But I don't lose her. She reappears—'

"And he went on so persistently that I thought of the young fellow in *The Ancient Mariner*, and began to grow dizzy. At last I fear I made more or less of a bolt of it, saying, 'Excuse me, I must go to rehearsal, but I will see you, I hope, another day?' And so we parted."

# VIII.

## CHIEFLY CONCERNING THE QUEEN'S AND THE GAIETY.

At the Queen's—First production of *Dearer than Life*, with Irving as 'Bob Gassit'—At the Gaiety—Farce and comedy—A memorable engagement with Phelps and Mathews—Reminiscences of Phelps—A little jest at Manchester—Phelps on Mathews and Mathews on Phelps—A young man who didn't set the Thames on fire—Phelps and Macready—Notes on the work and character of Phelps—Burnand and *Artful Cards*.

I.

"In January, 1863, I accepted an engagement at the Queen's with Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wigan, the company including Henry Irving, Charles Wyndham, John Clayton, H. J. Brough, Miss Nellie Moore, and Miss Henrietta Hodson, John Ryder being the stage-manager, and Liston acting manager. Our first production was Byron's admirable play, *Dearer than Life*.[1] It followed up

[1] "The plot of *Dearer than Life* is comparatively simple. Its hero, Michael Garner, is an industrious tradesman, who has acquired a comfortable subsistence by long years of honest labour. A strange compound of shrewdness and good-nature,

a line of character in which I had previously been fortunate enough to interest the public and the

a man whose natural quickness of perception is a little clouded by an unusually affectionate and trusting disposition, it is his lot to be married to a woman whose whole hopes are bound up in an only son. This son, at the commencement of the story, is about twenty-five years of age, and employed in a merchant's office in the city. It is the old tale of temptation and weakness. By the influence of a wily and unscrupulous associate, Charles Garner is led into betting and silly speculation. He is not deficient in good feeling, but he has ideas above his station. The story commences on the twenty-seventh anniversary of old Garner's wedding. By the 'scratching' of a favourite, Charles has been irretrievably ruined. He is engaged to a pretty cousin, and this young lady, Lucy Garner, is loved with a strange earnestness by his worthless and perfidious friend, Bob Gassit. A curious old uncle appears in the form of Mr. Ben Garner, who is chronically under the influence of gin. Lucy is one of those true and constant lovers of whose existence plays and romances inform us. She knows her Charlie is wild, but she is bent on redeeming and reforming him. She is quite proof against the insidious advances of Mr. Bob Gassit, and, though she does not share Mrs. Garner's blind confidence, on her side she contrives to minister to the old lady's weakness. Old Garner has a shrewd suspicion that his son has not been doing right, but he never imagines that he has committed a crime. After a time, it appears from Charlie's embarrassed manner that he is in trouble. Lucy finds this out, and taxes him with being in difficulties, and promises to relieve him by obtaining a sum of money which has been carefully hoarded up by his mother. In the meantime the company invited to assist in the celebrating of the anniversary of the marriage arrives. Chief among these is Mr. Boulter, an old friend of Michael's, who has gained some small reputation for convivial talents. Young Garner, rather refined by intercourse with

Press. 'Michael Garner' has always been a favourite with my audiences, and the play is made

MR. TOOLE AS "MICHAEL GARNER" IN "DEARER THAN LIFE."

memorable by Charles Dickens's prediction that there was an actor playing 'Bob Gassit' at the

sharpers, sneers at Boulter, but Michael fraternizes with him, talks of old times, and sings a song about the grip of an honest man. The party adjourn to dinner, but while they are enjoy-

Queen's who would be heard of again. That actor was our friend Irving. And what a support

ing themselves, Mr. Kedgeley, the employer of Charles, appears, demands an interview with Michael Garner, and informs him that his son has forged and embezzled. The heart-broken father calls for the reprobate, urges him to fly from justice, and accuses himself of the crime. The last act is in a garret at Lambeth. The whole family have been reduced from comparative comfort to starvation. Old Garner is a messenger earning a few shillings per week, Lucy is a seamstress, Mrs. Garner is bedridden, and Gassit is still persecuting Lucy with his suit. True to her old love, the heroine resists all the devices of Gassit, and though her landlady is fighting for rent, bears out patiently to the last. Ben Garner, in a fit of maudlin repentance, comes up to the garret, begs his brother to forgive him, and leaves a bottle of gin, which the despairing messenger swallows. In the intoxication which follows, Michael Garner loses all control of himself, and indulges in a bitter invective of his worthless son. This is overheard by Mrs. Garner, who shrieks out and falls as if dead. This misfortune sobers Garner, but at an opportune moment the long-lost son turns up with abundance of money to save his starving relatives. The piece ends with the defeat of the schemer Gassit, and the reward of virtue in the persons of old Garner, his wife, and Lucy. Of course the burden of the drama rests upon the shoulders of Mr. J. L. Toole, for whom it was written. Long ago in *Caleb Plummer*, Mr. Toole proved that he not only possessed the quaintest and most genial humour, but that, like most genuine humorists, he had a large fund of pathos. Nothing could have been more natural, more touching, more effective than his representation of 'Michael Garner,' the honest tradesman, the loving husband, the courageous and self-sacrificing toiler. The character may be rare, but that it is real was proved by the actor. Every situation in the piece was made striking and successful by Mr. Toole's thorough earnestness and his artistic

I had! You don't get such a cast nowadays. Fancy—Wyndham, Clayton, Brough, Nellie Moore, Miss Hodson, and Irving!

"Leaving the Queen's, I starred at the Standard for six or seven weeks, and at the Crystal Palace, Irving accompanying me. A year later I returned to the Queen's for a short season, and played 'Jack Snipe' in Watts Phillips's *Not Guilty*. In the same year I commenced a long engagement

attention to detail. The second act bears a dangerous resemblance to the second act of the *Porter's Knot*, and with any other actor it might have been a failure. But Mr. Toole is thoroughly original, and the resemblance of the piece to that in which the late Mr. Robson achieved his greatest success, only serves to show the contrast between the styles of the two actors. In some of the scenes he far excelled his impersonation of the old toy-maker, great as that was. The finest points were in the close of the second and the beginning of the third acts. The intense grief of the father when his son's guilt is revealed, the outburst of passionate affection when he implores him to fly from justice, and the utter despair which followed, were wonderfully realized. In the garret scene Mr. Toole improved upon himself. His delineation of the brave old man who could endure starvation with a pleasant face, and could be cheerful under the heaviest burden of misery, was only surpassed by the sudden exhibition of passion when, excited by the drink which his worthless brother has brought him, Michael flamed out into a denunciation of his son's guilt. Again, on the conclusion of the drama, when the old man's ready wit, inspired by an unexpected good fortune, obtained a fair opportunity, Mr. Toole contrived to mingle with consummate skill the humour and the pathos of the situation."—*Standard*, June 9th, 1868.

at the Gaiety, opening in a new domestic comedy written for me by Byron, *Uncle Dick's Darling*,[2]

[2] "Mr. J. L. Toole has commenced an engagement at this theatre by performing the principal character in a domestic drama new to London, written by Mr. Henry J. Byron, and entitled *Uncle Dick's Darling*. 'Dick Dolland' (Mr. J. L. Toole), familiarly called 'Uncle Dick,' is by profession a Cheap Jack. This profession has already been made familiar to playgoers by the Adelphi melodrama *Flowers of the Forest*, in which an itinerant trader of the kind was represented first by the late Mr. Wright, afterwards by Mr. Toole. But Mr. Byron seems to have more immediately contemplated the 'Dr. Marigold' of Mr. Charles Dickens than any character previously exhibited on the stage. Dick and his friend Joe Lennard, a blacksmith, have taken charge of Mary Belton, a foundling, and though she is expected to marry Joe, the ambitious Dick places her in a genteel boarding-school, kept by Mrs. Torrington. When her education is completed he pays her a visit, taking with him a formal proposal of marriage from Joe, but is considerably perplexed by a remark made by Mrs. Torrington, to the effect that Mary, being now by education a lady, must not marry a person of her guardian's rank in society. While he is seated on the steps of his van meditating on this remark, he is further perplexed by the appearance of Mr. Chevenix, a gentleman of wealth and influence, who has fallen in love with Mary at the house of one of her schoolfellows, and offers to make her his wife. On the following morning he is to call for Dick's reply, and in the meanwhile the Cheap Jack falls asleep. A considerable lapse of time apparently takes place, and when we see Mary in the second act she is the wife of Mr. Chevenix, living in great splendour, but far from happy, for her husband is a cold, austere man, evidently modelled upon Mr. Dombey, and she has imprudently set her affection upon the Hon. Claude Lorrimer, a *roué* of the *genus* exquisite. Uncle Dick, paying her a visit, is treated with rude hauteur by Mr. Cheve-

a piece which is still popular with my audiences. I always enjoy playing 'Uncle Dick,' and should enjoy it still more if I had my original 'Chevenix' back; not that Billington does not make a capital 'Chevenix,' but my early associations with Irving

nix, and is afflicted by the discovery that his darling encourages the dishonourable advances of Lorrimer. Another apparent lapse of time brings us to the third act, and we find Joe Lennard working, broken-hearted, at his forge, and discoursing with Dick on old times. From a newspaper the friends learn that Lorrimer has been lost at sea, and it speaks of him as a conspicuous personage in the great Chevenix divorce case, and presently Mary is seen at the window, a wandering outcast. Dick is not inclined to admit her, but at last yields to the persuasions of the more tender-hearted Joe, and she dies in the presence of her old friends. At this point the scene suddenly changes. Dick is discovered on the steps of his van, as we saw him at the end of the first act, and we find that the marriage of Mary and Mr. Chevenix, with the misfortunes consequent thereon, has been merely a dream. As in the case of *Victorine*, the dream has a practical result. Mary marries, not Chevenix, but Joe. This is a very pretty and ingeniously constructed drama, here and there a little too prolix, and somewhat too much imbued with the sentiment that associates virtue with corduroy rather than with clothing of finer texture. Three of the characters afford good scope for acting. These are 'Uncle Dick,' one of those half-pathetic, half-comic personages whom for years Mr. Toole has made his own; the engaging 'Mary,' very nicely played by Miss Neilson; and 'Mr. Chevenix,' whose ridiculous formality is most happily elaborated by Mr. Henry Irving, and who, in the first act, seems to be made up into a resemblance of a celebrated statesman. The success of the piece is most decided."—*Times*, December 15th, 1869.

in the part are so pleasant that, somehow, I always feel there is a kind of blank in the piece.

MISS NELLIE FARREN.

Of course, this is only a bit of personal sentiment, and the audience knows nothing of it; it

makes no difference to my acting, unless it may unconsciously add to the sentimental interest of the part.

"I played a big round of new and old pieces at the Gaiety, having the valuable assistance of that clever *comédienne*, Miss Nellie Farren, who, I fear, has more or less wasted her great abilities since then by an exclusive devotion to burlesque. I am not saying anything against burlesque; I have done a good deal in that direction myself; but I never allowed it to engross all my time and attention. I am not quoting myself as an example of genius which might have been spoiled by burlesque; nor am I suggesting that Miss Nellie Farren could not to-day, if she chose, or had the opportunity, play pure comedy as well as ever; but I fear that, working in the same groove for many years, and that groove not by any means the most artistic or desirable—namely, mere burlesque—is not calculated to improve one's art; indeed, it is calculated to lower its tone and purpose."

"But you yourself enjoy farce more than comedy, and farce is not the highest order of dramatic art," I suggested, "one blesses the man who invented laughter; and one thanks Byron and Burnand for the hearty, rollicking burlesques you played at the Gaiety."

"Yes, and I enjoyed them; the work both of

Burnand and Byron in the region of burlesque is, as a rule, of a far higher order than much of what is now called farcical comedy. As for what I like to play, I believe it very much depends upon what my audiences like. When my audiences are pleased with a serious piece, I am pleased; but I particularly enjoy a comic part; if I am in good robust health I revel in it, one has so much more margin than in serious comedy. I invented the business of the brush in 'Spriggins,' where I put it on my knee for protection. I had a touch of the gout, and a desire for mischief made me put the blacking brush on my knee where the major would strike me. His surprise was a first-rate unrehearsed effect, and I have done it ever since. Yes, I enjoy a rollicking farce. I laugh with the audience, and get carried away by the fun of it; and I enjoy pathetic scenes, too, but they tire me more than funny ones. I feel the sorrows of 'Caleb Plummer' sincerely, and always did; but of late years I feel quite grieved for him. I think the scene between the three, his daughter, himself, and 'Dot,' where she confesses her love for 'Tackleton,' and I have to tell her what he is, and when I know that my deceptions are at last discovered, are very beautiful; but the return of the boy who was thought to be drowned, coming on the top of the daughter's forgiveness, is altogether a most heart-stirring scene. There has

been some discussion about actors' feelings. No audience, in my opinion, was ever made to weep unless the actor had wept, or could weep, at what touched the audience. At the same time, an actor must be able to control himself. It is delightful, in such characters as 'Michael Garner,' 'Caleb Plummer,' 'Bob Cratchit,' and so on, to feel that the audience is in sympathy with the sentiment of the part you are playing. I sometimes think my Scotch audiences are more deeply moved by pathos than any other audiences, though they are quieter except at the ends of acts. The Midlanders laugh heartily; so do my London friends; but, after all, audiences are very much alike all the world over. A London audience one night will be quite different in its acceptance of fun or pathos from the audience that sits through the same piece the next night."

II.

"During my first seasons at the Gaiety, we played Byron's *Tottles*, *Wait and Hope*, *Paul Pry*, and *Our Clerks*. Miss Farren's 'Phœbe,' in *Paul Pry*, was as bright and clever as I should say it is possible to make it; and she was delightful in *Our Clerks*. We played *Aladdin the Second* (in which I introduced the catch phrase, 'and still I am not happy') and *Artful Cards*, a capital

piece by Burnand; and when the Spelling Bee mania was on I did a *Spelling Bee*, which was an immense go; I played the part of 'Professor Muddle.' We did the burlesque of *The Forty Thieves* and *Don Giovanni*, and Burnand's

MR. LIONEL BROUGH.

*Babes in the Wood;* also *Bib and Tucker;* I was 'Bib' and Brough was 'Tucker.' *Thespis*, in two acts, was Gilbert and Sullivan's first effort in the way of opera-bouffe or comic English opera; we produced it at the Gaiety; also *Shilly-Shally*, by Trollope and Reade, and when I closed my

engagement, *Much Too Clever*, by yourself and John Oxenford, had just become one of the most popular of our first pieces.

"During the engagement of Phelps and Charles Mathews at the Gaiety, I played with these two great actors—'Bob Acres,' in *The Rivals;* 'Mawworm,' in *The Hypocrite;* and 'Bulgruddery,' in *John Bull*. I then gave farewell performances prior to my visit to America, taking the Globe for the purpose, and I produced there for the first time Albery's *Wig and Gown*, and Byron's *Fool and His Money*. My season lasted ten weeks, and the business was first-rate.

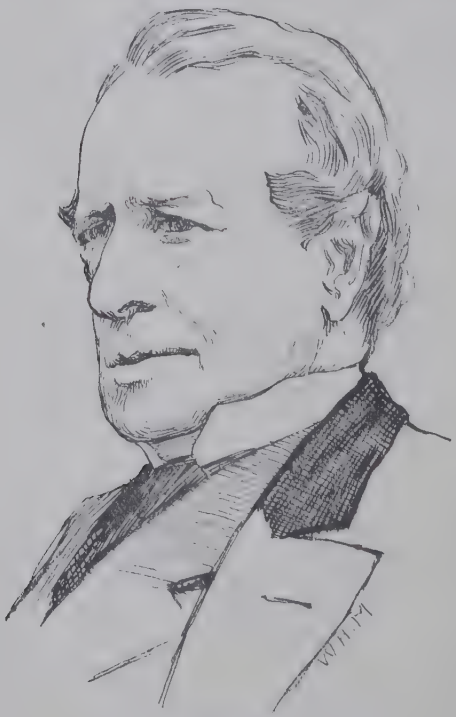
"I think my season with Phelps at the Gaiety was one of the most agreeable in all my experiences. I got to know Phelps very well, and to like him very much.

"When I was a boy, I used to go and see Phelps play at Sadler's Wells—watch for him at the stage-door. I saw him play all his leading parts. I saw him the first time he played 'Sir Pertinax Macsycophant,' in *The Man of the World*.[3] It was

[3] "The occasion of Mr. Greenwood's benefit last night at Sadler's Wells Theatre has given the town the opportunity of seeing Mr. Phelps in a new line of character, and the performance of Macklin's somewhat old-fashioned but admirable comedy of *The Man of the World* has enabled that able and versatile actor to add another character to his well-stored *répertoire*.

"Sir Pertinax Macsycophant has, with some trifling excep-

for Greenwood's benefit at Sadler's Wells. The house was packed so full that he had to come down



MR. PHELPS.

to the footlights and address the audience. There had been some murmuring among those who were

tions, when it has been revived to show the capacity of some actor to enunciate the Scottish dialect, been abandoned since

over-crowded. He told them that any lady or gentleman who couldn't obtain seats or were uncom-

the powerful and sarcastic Cooke gave the terrible portrait in its full vitality. The celebrated men who have since occupied the foremost position of the theatre have not attempted the delineation, though it embodies the most available and the most legitimate means of showing the actor's highest art—the power of impersonation, and the enunciation of a drastic satire of the highest flavour and the most potent effect. The character is in itself repulsive; the author has drawn it with a rigid regard for truth that seems to have been dictated by a personal abhorrence. It has not one popular speech—it has not one graceful phrase—it has not a single redeeming point. The resources of the theatre have not been called in to aid its situations or enforce its points. It is a character with which nothing can be done but by the aid of the purest art—it tests the actor in every word—it demands in every line the consummate performer. It is admirably drawn, and contrives to rivet the attention for five acts, and to supply the place of plot, sentiment, and action. To succeed in it is to achieve a high triumph, and this triumph Mr. Phelps attained by the purest and severest exercise of his art. From his first interview with his son till his diabolical and final curse, every tone, every look was emphatic and characteristic. In his devilish history of the crawling arts by which he attained station and wealth, he rose to the sublime of comedy, and the bitter satire thrilled whilst it almost appalled. It unmasked the villain, but the character was admirably developed, and, safe in a nobler state of society, we could afford to laugh, or rather to scoff, at the unmitigated scoundrel. We felt that the whip of satire was in a powerful hand, and the sordid vices were receiving a wholesome and severe chastisement. The great merit of the performance consists in its being given with tremendous power, and in its yet preserving the *vis comica*. Such a scourging of vice elevates the theatre into a wholesome purifier, and its pro-

fortable would have their money returned to them at the box-office. It was rather a nervous sort of thing for him to have to do upon such an occasion. It was a great night. He made a tremendous hit in the part of 'Sir Pertinax,' which continued to be one of his favourite and most remarkable impersonations.

"Mathews was very jolly at the Gaiety. He used to say in a chaffing way he was afraid it was a bad thing giving the public so much; they would always be expecting to see us three together:

fessors into valuable assistants to moral teachers. The portrayal, as a piece of art, is beyond common praise, and must attract every connoisseur of the drama to witness it. We have not space to point out the various excellences of the portrait, but can truly say we never remember—though we remember the whole of the career of the elder Kean and of Miss O'Neill—to have seen a more potent piece of acting. The comedy was tastefully put on the stage, and performed in all respects well by Mr. Barrett, Mr. F. Robinson, Mrs. Marston, and Miss Fitzpatrick, the latter being very agreeable and charming in Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt. The house was crowded in every part by a most respectable audience, the esteemed character of the acting-manager always drawing a remarkably full house. And we are sure the lovers of dramatic art will feel obliged to him for giving them the opportunity of seeing Mr. Phelps to such extraordinary advantage. It will revive the popularity of a comedy which by no means should become obsolete; for though originally perhaps a little too much directed against a particular nation, it is still universal in its application."—F. G. Tomlins in the *Morning Advertiser*, Nov. 28th, 1851.

'and I cannot afford to carry Phelps about the country.'

"In *John Bull*, Phelps, of course, played 'Job Thornbury;' Charles Mathews, 'Shuffleton;' and I played the Irishman, who speaks the first lines. I was a little nervous, having to struggle with the brogue, and just as I spoke two seats in the gallery broke down. The commotion upset me a little, but I got over it when I found that the noise was not hostile to my brogue.

"Phelps said to me, 'Hollingshead wants us to play together in a piece specially written for the three of us.' He asked me what I thought about it—if I knew any piece that would suit us. I said, 'Yes, I know the very thing. It would, I believe, be an immense go.' I excited the dear old fellow's interest tremendously. 'Well,' he said, at last, 'what is it?' '*Ici on parle Français*, with Phelps as the Major, Mathews as the Frenchman, and myself as Spriggins!'

"When Phelps was very much amused, or very much moved, he closed his eyes, and occasionally, as you know, thrust his hand into the breast of his waistcoat. He closed his eyes on this occasion, and chuckled immensely.

"Irving and Phelps lodged in the same house at Manchester. Irving was then playing with the Batemans. Phelps was very regular in his

habits ; went to bed immediately after he got home, and was up early in the morning. These were not Irving's habits ; he is fond of the night ; likes to take a rest after his work, a cup of tea and a book in the morning. So they did not meet as often as they might have done. But Phelps had a very high opinion of Irving, which he expressed to me on several occasions."

III.

"One night I was passing through Manchester, on my way to Glasgow, and knowing that Phelps was there, staying at a well-known theatrical house —Mrs. Brown's—I called upon him. He had gone to some official dinner, but Mrs. Brown said he would be home at ten o'clock.

"I told her not to say who I was, as I contemplated a little joke, but to inform him that a gentleman had called, and would call again.

"Phelps was at home to the minute. I was in the passage, and heard him go upstairs.

"When he had got into his room, I sent up word to say that I wanted him to help me on my way by playing for my benefit ; I would play 'Macbeth' to his 'Macduff,' and he 'Iago' to my 'Othello.'

"Mrs. Brown was a bright sort of woman, and

I got her to deliver this as a message, saying that my name was Jacob Simpkins.

"I listened, and heard him say, 'Tell him to come to the theatre to-morrow morning. I will not be troubled in this way at my rooms and at this time of night.' He grumbled and marched about. 'Play for his benefit! Never heard of him! What does he mean?'

"When she came down, I wrote him a letter in the hall, badly spelt, in which I informed him that I had seen him play certain parts at Sadler's Wells —a more or less ignorant burlesque kind of letter —and that, if he was not inclined to play for my benefit, would he spare me a shilling or two, or a little refreshment; couldn't he send me a little refreshment down.

"I modelled my letter on many begging epistles that I had received myself, and I asked Mrs. Brown to supplement the letter by saying that if he'd send me a little drop of something down to drink his health, it shouldn't be mentioned at Islington.

"He was very angry at this. Said he wouldn't send me a little drop of something down; I might come to the theatre the next day at eleven o'clock, if he could help me he would; but he would not have me there, and if I didn't go he would be very much inclined to force me. It was a most disgraceful thing to worry him in that way.

"In the midst of his rage I pushed my way past Mrs. Brown, getting on the shady side of her, and said, 'Sir, sir; a little of something hot!' Before he could express his indignation at this intrusion, I had allowed him to recognize me. He was very merry over the incident, and we spent a pleasant and agreeable evening."

IV.

"SOME people thought Phelps starchy and stiff; but he was naturally shy and bashful, and to those who knew him, genial, cordial, and of very agreeable and pleasant manners.

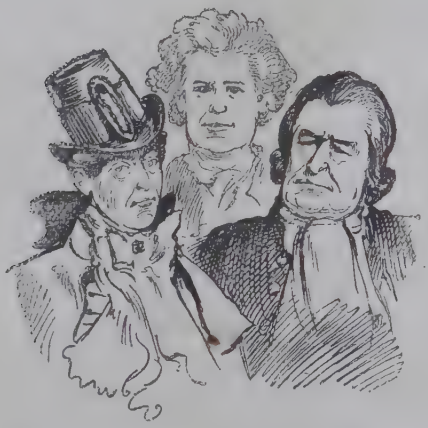
"When we were playing in *John Bull* at the Gaiety we were photographed together for the *Illustrated London News*; the three of us, Phelps, Mathews, and myself. The photographer was very much impressed with his work, and very anxious; and just as he had posed to his entire satisfaction, Phelps gave one of his little nervous coughs.

"Mathews remarked, 'It's no good trying to get your tragedy cough into the picture, Phelps; it can't be done.'

"And of course it could not. Don't think the most scientific artist has yet discovered a way to

photograph a tragedy cough—a comedy smile is, of course, a very different thing.

"We were photographed in character. Phelps had on one of his heavy tragic wigs, and Mathews one of his tall comedy hats. Just before the last pose, the photographer suggested that Mr.



PHELPS, MATHEWS, AND TOOLE, IN "JOHN BULL."

Mathews should take off his hat. 'It will make your face lighter.'

"Mathews, in his quick, merry way, taking off his hat, said, 'Don't you think if Mr. Phelps took off his tragedy wig it would make *his* face lighter?'

"It was a very interesting business altogether;

more particularly for me, studying the special characteristics and individualities of these two very remarkable men, Phelps as great and delightful in his line as Mathews in his. I drew them both out afterwards about each other. Phelps said of Mathews: 'An admirable actor; but, don't you think, rather flippant?' Mind you, they both admired each other very much. Mathews said of Phelps: 'A fine actor; but, off the stage, rather heavy, eh?'"

V.

"PHELPS, at Sadler's Wells, had been induced by a friend to take that friend's son into the company. He was a bit of a swell in his way, the young fellow, very fond of acting, and could not be got to settle down to regular work. Was anxious to go upon the stage, and Phelps was induced to give him a salary and bring him into the company with a view to his getting on. He began by playing a small part in *Timon of Athens*.

"One night during the performance the young man did not turn up. He sent no excuse either by letter or in any other way, and the next morning there was no communication from him. So Phelps gave instructions to the stage-porter that

he was not to be admitted to the theatre again. The young man came the next night and received this message, at which he was very angry; and he waited about all the evening until he could speak to Mr. Phelps.

"He caught Phelps leaving the stage-door, and asked for an explanation.

"Whereupon Phelps said, 'Why, what do you mean, sir? You never came to the theatre at all last night.'

"'No, I did not.'

"'Why?'

"'Such a night as it was, Mr. Phelps! Raining in torrents. Why I wouldn't have sent a dog out.'

"The explanation rather staggered Phelps. One mentions it as an illustration of how little some people understand about theatres and theatrical work. Phelps forgave him and took him back; but I need hardly say that he did not 'set the Thames on fire.'"

VI.

"When Phelps came to Drury Lane with Macready, he alternated the parts of 'Macbeth' and 'Macduff.' He made a great hit in 'Macduff.' It was one of his best performances.

The fight was terrific. You know when Macready was fighting he always, under his breath, used to bully 'Macduff,' calling him 'Beast!' 'Wretch!' 'Scoundrel!' &c. It was suggested to Phelps that he should do the same. So when Macready called him 'Beast!' Phelps retorted, 'Brute!' 'Demon!' 'Fiend!' 'Ruffian!' &c. The play over, Phelps expected to be rebuked, and, as he anticipated, was promptly sent for to Mr. Macready's room. But it was to be praised.

"'Thank you very much, Mr. Phelps; more particularly in the fight. I have never found anybody before to work with me so pleasantly.'

"I asked Phelps if this story was true, and he said, 'Yes, it is; quite true.'"

VII.

If the career of Mr. Phelps was not what is called an eventful one, it makes, in the hands of his nephew, Mr. W. May Phelps and Mr. John Forbes Robertson, a singularly interesting biography. "The story," remarks my host, "is capitally told in their introductory chapter," and on this hint I venture to quote the leading paragraphs of this admirable prologue to a delightful book:—

"Samuel Phelps inherited the instincts of a gentleman, and throughout the whole of his career he never forgot that he was one. He was of good family, and, though not what is called college-bred, of good education. He was a doting husband and father and a fast friend. Exceedingly fond of children, he would often take an infant out of the arms of any nurse he might meet in his walks and kiss it.

"Attached to his home, he would rather dine with his family on plain fare than sit down to a banquet without them. Not that he by any means despised good things; for, when they came in his way, nothing pleased him more than having a few friends round his table to share them with him. He had a great liking for gardening and even agriculture, and, had he been able to retire early in life, he would have made a good country gentleman. At Chelsea, where he resided from 1840 to 1844, he had a large piece of ground attached to his house, where he grew some beautiful specimens of choice flowers and plants, giving them his own personal attention. He was as pleased with his achievements in this way as he was with his success on the stage. His gardener, for the greater part of this period, was an Irishman, who had held the same position at William Cobbett's some years before, and was

mightily proud of both his masters, as he told one of the present writers.

"The Lion Hotel, Farningham, Kent, was his principal residence when fishing or shooting. He spent more time in that county than in any other part of the kingdom, and he was known to all the farmers round about. He took great interest in all that pertained to their welfare, and even went so far out of his usual custom as to take the chair at some of their club dinners, when held at this house. They had no idea who he was, and simply regarded him as a sportsman, who liked to mix in their society. E. L. Blanchard tells an anecdote of one of them discovering him, to his great astonishment, as the Doge of Venice, when he brought his family up to see that piece at Drury Lane Theatre in 1867. Mr. Phelps had no wish ever to be lionized, and no doubt told the proprietor of the Lion Hotel of his desire to remain incognito.

"To his profession Mr. Phelps brought immense perseverance. He was a great reader, and, although not a classical scholar, he was familiar through translations with all the great minds of the antique world, and he remained a student in every sense of the word almost to the day of his death. As an actor we place him second to none. In tragedy he combined many of the best characteristics of John Kemble and

Edmund Kean. He had much of the dignity, breadth, and intensity of the former as well as the fire and impulsive energy of the latter. He was endowed with a good figure, standing five feet nine inches when he first appeared in London. His face was generously modelled, and possessed expressive features with a fair-sized grey eye. He had a magnificent natural voice, whose compass embraced every shade of emotion.

"Many admirers of Macready have stated that Phelps founded his tragic style on his great predecessor; and one paper said that, 'while he showed great fire and pathos, he possessed less subtlety than Macready, and never rose to the height of his nobler impulses, or those supreme bursts of emotion with which he could, upon occasion, electrify and excite his audience in an extraordinary degree.'

"All that need be said as to Phelps taking Macready as an example in tragedy is simply this, that Phelps's style and manner were completely formed and publicly recognized and acknowledged before ever he came to London at all. He never saw Macready act from the front of the house but once in his life; and he was too angry at his treatment of him during the first four years he was in London to think anything about him or his acting. He laughed at the idea him-

self, when questioned upon the point by the present writers, and when asked why he did not publicly deny it, he said it was not worth his while to deny what he thought must be patent to all those who saw much of him. He added that his style was his own, whether it was good, bad, or indifferent, and that he never saw any of his great predecessors after he was old enough to form any opinion of them. To us, in the great majority of his tragic characters, he was as different from Macready as it was possible to be in the case of two men otherwise so equally matched.

"Mr. Phelps married very early in life. He was just over twenty-two, while his wife was only sixteen. She was a daughter of a friend of the lady in whose house he was a boarder. The wedding, although it was known they were engaged, took place without the privity of the mother, who was a widow: first, because she might reasonably plead for a little delay, and secondly, on the very characteristic ground that they wished the whole affair to pass off as quietly as possible. Moreover, he was on the eve of his departure for the North to commence his career as an actor.

"The marriage was in every way a happy one. Never were a couple more mutually devoted to each other. She anticipated his every wish; and

when, in 1867, she finally left him after seven years' intense suffering from cancer, of which disease her own mother and only sister died, he was so cast down that his family thought he would never rally again. Indeed, he never was the same man afterwards. On the morning after her departure he told his nephew that he had lived through twenty deaths during the previous seven years.

"He was a great pedestrian, and never rode until very late in life. He would frequently start from his house in Canonbury Square, up the Holloway Road and Highgate Hill, to the village of Highgate, thence to the Broad Walk on Hampstead Heath, and back to his residence before dinner, when he had no rehearsals on. His rate of walking was never less than at the rate of five miles an hour. This he did to keep his fat down, he said; for he was inclined to corpulency, like several of the male members of his family. By this means he kept himself pretty nearly all his life between eleven and twelve stone in weight. He dined at 2.30, especially when acting; and after dinner he took a nap on the couch from 4 to 5, and then a couple of cups of tea and a cigar. All the liquid he took during the evening, when acting, was a little barley water now and then, just to moisten his mouth. He was never at home to any

but the most intimate friends, except by appointment, and it was more than the housemaid's situation was worth to admit a stranger between the hours of 2 and 5 p.m. He spent a great deal of his spare time fishing and shooting. He was a deft thrower of the fly, and knew nearly every trout stream in England. Nor was he less successful with the gun, and rarely missed being out on the first day of partridge and pheasant shooting for thirty-five years.

"He never went out of his own country till the year 1859, when he took his company to Berlin. He was well received by the Germans, and highly spoken of by many of them. The press said he was equal to their own Iffland and Ludwig Devrient, and private individuals said their superior. In their criticisms they placed his acting of Shakespeare's four greatest characters in the following order of merit—Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet, and Othello. At Berlin he was patronized nightly by the King and Queen, and their son and daughter the Crown Prince and Princess, —the latter our own Princess Royal. After having gone from Berlin to Leipzig and Dresden, he acted at Hamburg on his way home.

"He never went to America, although frequently on the point of concluding an engagement to do so. He was often assured by Ameri-

cans that he could go through the States with five of his characters, and make sufficient to have retired on. But his early friend, Mrs. Warner's, description of her tour in 1851 was the main cause of his never attempting it. Besides, he had an objection to being absent from London so long, and she, knowing his temperament well, declared it would have worried him out of his life. Mr. Frederick Robinson, his later friend, on the other hand, who has been there now some twenty years and more, has said he was sure, had Mr. Phelps gone between the years 1860 and 1870, that both he and his acting would have been so thoroughly appreciated that he would have enjoyed the tour rather than otherwise.

"Mr. Phelps once acted five nights at a provincial theatre with Edmund Kean, a fact which has been derided by some, and variously described by others. His nephew distinctly remembers Mr. Phelps telling his father, who was the tragedian's elder brother, that one night, after *The Iron Chest* was concluded, Kean told his secretary to ask the young man who played Wilford to come to him, and on his appearing the great actor said, 'You have played your part well to-night, sir, and if you continue as you have begun, you will one day tread in my shoes.'"

VIII.

"THERE was a very bright *raconteur* at Sadler's Wells, in Charles Fenton, the scene-painter," continues Toole. "Phelps used to go into his room now and then and get him to tell stories.

"Fenton played a small part exceedingly well in *Apple Blossoms*. He used to tell wonderful Jew stories, inconsequent kind of romances. There was one, I remember, about a body that could not be buried underground, or else all the property would go away from the heirs, so they put it on the top of a hill. He used to mix the incidents up in a curious sort of way, and, when there was any point open to doubt, would settle it with the remark, 'That's what they say down at West Hartlepool.' It was one of those inconsequent stories which lead to nothing; but, from the way in which they are told, are often very amusing.

"Burnand has a peculiar knack of making inconsequent speeches; he can talk about nothing in the cleverest way. He once, when we were at a party together in Liverpool, invented a bogus game of cards. It was at an evening party. Four gentlemen had been playing whist in a very serious, not to say ostentatious, way, and for

pretty large stakes. When they went down to supper we took their table, myself, Burnand, and several others. Burnand suggested that we should all put on the table little piles of money, reckoning how much we each contributed, so that we could

MR. F. C. BURNAND.

redistribute it when our bogus game was over. It was understood that during the game we all acquiesced in anything any player did; that we should deal as many or as few cards as we liked; and that any player, at an opportune moment,

should triumphantly lay down any card and take the stakes, whatever they were, collecting from each heap besides what there was in the pool. We had about thirty pounds on the table. We were just in the full swing of our fun, invented for the unostentatious whisters, when they came up from supper. They came straight to the table and looked on. Burnand dealt; he gave three cards to some, four to others, and took only two himself. We all looked at our cards very carefully, and laid each card down with a great show of caution. Burnand, as the dealer, waited until we had all exhausted our cards, when he said triumphantly, 'Oh, indeed; you call for the Three of Hearts; very well, here it is!' upon which we were all very much cast down, and he swept the board; but returned a sovereign to me and ten shillings to another player, because we were 'fifth and third out.'

"Then I dealt, giving each three cards. We went through the same mystery of care and caution, laid down our cards in a curious way, Burnand putting all his down together, the others playing, as it seemed, all out of turn, and Burnand suddenly crying out—'It's a double Corsican—it's Johnnie's!'

"'Of course it is,' I said, with well-feigned surprise and delight.

"'It's the first time we have had a double Corsican,' said Burnand.

"I quietly took up the pool, and asked for two pounds each in addition.

MR. TOOLE IN "ARTFUL CARDS."

"We carried the game on for some time with enthusiasm, the lookers-on occasionally asking questions, which we were too busy to answer. At last, I suggested that a little supper would be a good thing; and then Burnand, in an off-hand

manner, told the inquiring lookers-on that the game was the new Corsican game of 'Bolo' and 'Catchorka.' They said it seemed a very exciting game. Burnand said it was the *only* game at cards. They said they would like to learn it. He advised them to get Collins's book on it from Longmans; and we went down to supper.

"The fun of the whole thing was the acting of Burnand, his by-play, his asides. We all played up to him with perfect sincerity; and I think the incident gave Burnand more than one suggestion for *Artful Cards*."

IX.

"You were speaking the other day of my first-night friends," said Toole, as I was pocketing the sheet of note-paper upon which I had chronicled in hieroglyphics Burnand's merry card-trick. "I must tell you about one of the most regular and devoted of my first-night friends. He is a very pleasant city man, who has a fancy for addressing letters to me with nothing on the envelope but simply 'J. L. Toole, Esq.' I remonstrate with him now and then, but he always very cheerily explains, 'But you get it; you get it, my boy.'

"'Yes,' I say, 'but don't you think it is putting the Post Office to trouble?'

"'Not a bit. That's fame, you see. J. L. Toole is quite enough for the Post Office.'

"I suggested to him the other day that the best test would be to put a £100 note into it: and that reminds me of Planché's story of Sheridan Knowles. He was acting in the country, and received an urgent, anxious letter from Mrs. Knowles, informing him that two hundred pounds which he had promised to send her on a certain day had never reached her. Knowles thereupon wrote a very angry letter to Sir Francis Freeling, who was then Postmaster-General, informing him that on such a day, and at such an hour, and at such a post-office, he posted a letter containing two hundred pounds in Bank of England notes addressed to Mrs. Knowles, which had never arrived at its destination. He denounced the Post Office authorities in strong terms, and demanded an immediate inquiry into the matter, the delivery of the money to his wife, and an apology for its detention.

"Sir Francis, in reply, wrote him a very pleasant letter, as if they were perfect strangers to each other, which they were not, telling him that he had received so much pleasure from his published works that he looked upon him as a friend, and at

the same time acknowledged that Knowles was quite correct in stating that he had posted the letter in question containing the bank-notes; but that he had omitted not only his signature inside but all address outside the letter, having sealed up the notes in an envelope with the words, 'I send you the money,' which he had posted without any direction. The letter was opened at the chief office, and detained until inquiry should be made. Sir Francis finished by informing him that by the time he received this letter the money would be in Mrs. Knowles's hands; the Post Office had sent it by special messenger.

"Knowles, who had begun his complaint to Sir Francis with a severe 'Sir,' wrote back "My dear Sir,—You are right, and I am wrong. God bless you! I will call upon you when I come to town.'

"A curious, absent-minded man, Knowles. Meeting a friend, he said, 'Ah, my dear fellow, Abbott, I am off to-morrow: can I take any letters for you?'

"'You are very kind,' said Abbott; 'but where are you going to?'

"'I haven't made up my mind,' replied Knowles.

"On another occasion, seeing Mr. O. Smith, a well-known actor, on the other side of the Strand, Knowles rushed over to him, shook hands with him, and inquired after his health.

"Smith had no personal acquaintance with Knowles, but knew him by sight.

"'Thank you, Mr. Knowles, very much,' he said; "but you are mistaken, I am O. Smith.'

"'I beg you ten thousand pardons,' said Knowles; 'I took you for your namesake, T. P. Cooke.'"

## X.

"And now, what about our trip to the North? This is Wednesday; we will go quietly down to York on Saturday."

"I have collected the English and American press reports relating to your American tour," I said; "you shall give me your 'Impressions of America' to-morrow, and then 'we'll up and away for the North Countrie.'"

"Very well," he said, with a pretence of energy that for a moment deceived me, "let us finish the American business right off."

"Not to-night," I said. "I will come again to-morrow."

"Had you there!" he exclaimed. "I've tired you to-day as much as you have tired me."

"I hope we shall not tire the reader," I said, closing my note-book.

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